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### A Study of the Effects of Fishbowl Group Structures on the Verbal Self-Disclosure and Feedback of Graduate Clinical Psychology Students Participating in a Systematic Human Relations Training Laboratory

Dana R. Taylor  
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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF FISHBOWL GROUP STRUCTURES ON  
THE VERBAL SELF-DISCLOSURE AND FEEDBACK OF GRADUATE  
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN A  
SYSTEMATIC HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING LABORATORY

BY

DANA R. TAYLOR  
B.A., University of Georgia, 1979

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology  
in the Graduate Studies Program  
of the College of Arts and Sciences  
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Orlando, Florida

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## I. THE PROBLEM

### Introduction

Irvin Yalom (1975) suggests that modern society suffers from a "common social malady." Individuals have become intrapersonally and interpersonally alienated as a result of what he describes as "an inexorable decomposition of social institutions which ordinarily provide for human intimacy" (p. 487). The primary family and small social groups from which children and adolescents learn and model intimate personal identity and interpersonal skills have become disrupted. The roles of men and women, mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, and the arenas of interaction of these entities are undergoing cataclysmic transformations. The contemporary focus on technology and commerciality has emphasized the roles of adversary competition and cultivated deceptive personal facades. Task groups, which, as Cohen and Epstein (1981) point out, avoid and suppress references to the interpersonal communication process, have become central to social organization. Gerard Egan (1975) proposes that if the significant adults in a child's life are impotent in their ability to model and express respect, caring, genuineness and



empathy, the child will also fail to develop such skills. Further, in building from White's (1963) proposals that interpersonal competence is a critical factor in a positive sense of identity, Egan suggests that such a child will think of himself as unworthy of care. The results are often a sense of personal inadequacy, alienation, self-abrogation, a sense of emptiness (Yalom, 1975), and within the social macrocosm, feelings of powerlessness and social demoralization (Egan, 1979). The overall effect on the individual is what Maslow (1978) describes as "the psychopathology of the average".

Egan (1979) concludes that the lack of basic facilitative levels of interpersonal skills has also led to a crisis in the helping professions. Robert Carkhuff (1969, 1972; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967) indicates that counseling based on low levels of facilitative interpersonal skills can be a destructive process. The research of Carkhuff and his colleagues has reported samples of experienced counselors who, on the average, performed at low levels of interpersonal skills. Within the context of these perspectives, Truax and Carkhuff (1967) have pioneered interpersonal skill development for counselors based on didactic-experiential training programs. Egan (1976) has incorporated this approach in a program designed for systematic training in the skills



of interpersonal living. Egan presents his model as a Systematic Human Relations Training Laboratory.

Egan (1976) proposes that one's interpersonal perception and behavior, which he refers to as "interpersonal style", is based on one's motivations, needs, personality characteristics, attitudes and values. The systematic human relations training laboratory concentrates on improving interpersonal self-awareness, skills and assertiveness. The model provides didactic training relating to interpersonal style development and the acquisition of core interpersonal skills. It further provides experiential learning through the opportunity for individuals to explore their interpersonal values and level of interpersonal skills, as well as to change and experiment with their interpersonal behavior while receiving feedback from others within the interaction of a small group.

#### Development: Human Relations Training

Contemporary Human Relations Training originated in the mid-1940's from the work of Kurt Lewin and his associates, Leland Bradford, Ronald Lippit and Kenneth Benne (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974; Shapiro, 1978; Yalom, 1975; Hansen, Warner and Smith, 1976). Lewin began his career under the influence of Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Kohler of the Gestalt movement in Germany (Schultz, 1975). The orthodox Gestalt orientation in



experimental psychology emphasized the explanation of perception and learning through physiological constructs. Through proposing Gestalt-oriented psychological-social constructs focusing on the interaction of needs, personality and social factors, Lewin became an innovative pioneer in applied social psychology. Central to his psychological-social constructs was a "field theory" which focused on explaining psychological process in terms of individual needs in interaction with one's environment (the psychological field or "life space"). This analysis corresponded to the Gestalt principles of organization from a molar perspective of organic wholes. As his career progressed, Lewin became more involved in groups as they constituted a social field. He researched not only the individual in interaction within the group, but also the development of the group as an organic whole, for which he developed the term "group dynamics".

Stimulated by traumatic social events in Nazi Germany, Lewin became active in "social action research". This involved the study of relevant social problems with a goal of effecting change. To this end he founded the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues in 1942 in the United States. Central to the early development of the laboratory method of human



relations training was Lewin's principle of "no research without action, no action without research".

The first training group (t-group) was developed in 1946 at New Britain, Connecticut. Lewin and Lippit, both social psychologists, and Bradford and Benne, both educators, were asked by the Connecticut Interracial Commission to train leaders to resolve intergroup tensions related to the implementation of the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act. The initial structure consisted of morning task groups led by Bradford and Benne, with the purpose of developing individual and group techniques for improving community intergroup relations. The groups were objectively oriented to the task and proceeded with discussions and role playing. Lewin and Lippit were concerned with studying the group dynamics of the task groups. Research observers were assigned to the groups, and the leaders and observers met in the evening to discuss the development of the group dynamics. Eventually, group members became involved in the evening analysis sessions. This integration of the educational group and observation-analysis group led to the discovery of the experiential learning group. Group members observed and analyzed their own interactions in reference to their interpersonal style as well as to the development of the interpersonal style of the group as a whole.



Lewin died soon after the Connecticut workshop, but Bradford, Lippit and Benne continued to develop the t-group model. Benne (1964) presented the goals of the early basic skill training groups (BST). Members were to 1) learn sets of concepts regarding social change, change agents and group dynamics; 2) practice applying diagnostic and action skills of a change agent; 3) acquire trainer skills; and 4) develop more objective and accurate self-perceptions as related to their role as an agent of social change; 5) analyze "back home" organizational problems; and 6) develop plans for intervening in the "back home" situations.

By 1950 the National Training Laboratory had become established under the National Education Association, with Leland Bradford as executive director. In the years that followed, clinical/counseling psychologists began having a major influence on the development of the t-group. With the integration of the theories and methodologies of social psychology, education and clinical/counseling psychology, at least three significant trends evolved: 1) the traditional t-group with a group dynamics and organizational emphasis; 2) the sensitivity training/encounter group, referred to as "group therapy for normal", which emphasized individual dynamics and the development of interpersonal skills for personal growth and development; and 3) didactic



experiential training programs for teaching facilitative interpersonal skills to therapists. One of the most influential figures from clinical/counseling psychology was Carl Rogers. Rogers impacted the t-group with the full force of the Humanistic movement in psychology.

Rogers' early career was strongly influenced by religion and philosophy (Meador & Rogers, 1979). He attended the Union Theological Seminary for two years. He then entered Teachers College of Columbia University and embarked on his career in clinical psychology. His academic training provided him with a wide range of training from traditional and modern psychoanalytic theory, to the scientific, operational and statistical based theories of Thorndike. Rogers received his doctorate and began work at the Child Study Department of a Rochester social agency. Here he encountered perhaps the most significant influence to the development of his client-centered approach to therapy. The social workers at the center had been trained in the methods and theories of Otto Rank. Rank proposed that three factors influence psychotherapy: 1) the individual, who consists of inherently constructive forces which constitute a will toward health; 2) the therapist, who guides the individual to self-acceptance and self-understanding through 3) a spontaneous and unique experience in context of a relationship based on



the therapist as a human being, not on his technical skill. In 1940 Rogers moved to Ohio State University with the intention of training graduate students. Rogers' objective was to develop an understanding of the therapeutic process and why individuals change. In 1942 he published Counseling and Psychotherapy. Within this text, he presented initial perspectives as to the basis of the counseling relationship. He proposed that therapy should involve the warmth and responsiveness of the therapist within a permissive setting, where feelings could be openly expressed without coercion or pressure. Also, Rogers expressed the desire to stimulate research with presentations of numerous explicit and implicit hypotheses. Rogers moved to the University of Chicago in 1945. During the years of the development of the t-group, Rogers formulated and researched his theories on the basics of the therapeutic process, which culminated in the publication of Client-Centered Therapy in 1951.

Rogers presented a humanistic-based therapeutic approach which fused existential, phenomenological, gestalt and experiential orientations. From his early exposure to philosophy and religion through his involvement with theological students at the University of Chicago, Rogers has developed an existential orientation. Gerald Corey (1977) presents an excellent



summary of existential-humanistic philosophy and basic assumptions as descended from such philosophers as Kirkegaard, Nietzsche, Binswanger, Heidegger and Buber. "The philosophy of human nature emphasizes purpose, choice, freedom and self-determination. Individuals have the capacity for expanding self-awareness, which leads to freedom and responsibility for shaping their destiny, which in turn leads to existential anxiety. Thrust into a meaningless and absurd world, the person is basically alone and must create his or her own meaning of life, which is highlighted by the awareness of death " (p. 24). Within this context, Rogers has sought to define the therapeutic relationship as facilitating the individual's capacity for expanding self-awareness and catalyzing the individual's inherent tendency toward self-actualization. Toward these ends, Rogers (1957) proposed "The necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change". If the therapist entered into a relationship with the client in which he expressed 1) genuineness, 2) empathetic understanding and 3) unconditional positive regard, then positive personality change would occur. The approach was phenomenological in that it emphasized the therapist's understanding the internal frame of reference of the client's perception of reality. Rogers (1958) also proposed "A Process Conception of Psychotherapy" which



conveyed gestalt and experiential orientations. The therapeutic process was presented as enabling the individual to reorganize his concept of self to bring it into congruence with his experience. In gestalt terms, this integration results in a unity of perception of the self as whole and releases one's capacity for self-actualization, a generation of self-meaning more than the sum of the parts. Rogers (1951) stated that the essence of therapy was in the experiential relationship between client and therapist. "Therapy consists of experiencing the self in a wide range of ways in an emotionally meaningful relationship with the therapist" (p. 172). In essence, Rogers has proposed that interpersonal relationships built on emotional genuineness, empathic understanding and positive regard can promote self-disclosure, self-exploration, self-awareness, self-integration and self-actualization. The uncovering and clarification of basic processes in which interpersonal communications could yield such powerful potential to human development and growth has had great impact on all fields of human relations. The Rogerian approach began to be incorporated in the t-group to facilitate the experiential learning processes. The result was often much greater than facilitating the development of interpersonal skills. As Yalom (1975) described, the t-group became a "social oasis", an environment of personal



authenticity and interpersonal support and cohesion. Individuals could share self-doubts, explore new fulfilling ways of relating and genuinely experiencing intimacy and acceptance. As therapists became more involved with t-groups, the experiential learning processes became labeled as "sensitivity training" due to their increased emphasis on developing interpersonal communications.

Eventually, the sensitivity training groups, which had evolved from the objectives of the t-groups, became focused on facilitating personal growth and development. Rogers (1967) labeled the process of achieving interpersonal authenticity and self-awareness through group interaction as the "basic encounter". By the decade of the sixties, "encounter groups" were a national phenomenon. The Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, became the most significant center for the development of the encounter group. The center's orientation was integrative, consisting of the contributions of such psychologists as William Schutz, Fritz Pearls, Bernard Gunther and Carl Rogers.

The evolution of training programs for therapists has also provided a legacy of crucial elements to the development of the systematic human relations training laboratory. Matarazzo (1978) states that the majority of research literature on therapist training programs



has been developed from 1) the Rogerian-oriented, didactic-experiential programs to Truax, Carkhuff and Douds (1968) and Truax and Carkhuff (1967); 2) the microcounseling method of teaching interviewing skills of Ivey (1971); and 3) techniques of teaching behavior modification skills. She concludes that the Rogerian-oriented programs have been the most influential to the systematic research of training psychotherapeutic skills. These programs have also been the most influential to the development of Egan's Systematic Human Relations Training Laboratory.

Truax and Carkhuff (1967) present a systematic approach, which adds elements of a didactic approach. Rogers (1957) stressed the need for supervisors to model genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding, and to create a facilitative atmosphere for experiential learning. He presented a training program consisting of 1) listening to tape recordings of experienced therapists; 2) role-playing between trainees; 3) observation of live demonstrations; 4) conducting individual psychotherapy and recording interviews for discussion with a facilitative nondirective supervisor; 5) personal therapy; and 6) participation in group or multiple therapy.

From their research, Truax and Carkhuff (1967) concluded that "the central ingredient of the



psychotherapeutic process appears to be the therapist's ability to perceive and communicate, accurately and with sensitivity, the feelings of the patient and the meaning of those feelings" (p. 285). Thus, it is not sufficient for a therapist to master the skills of communicating; he must also develop a mastery of phenomenological perception. As Truax and Carkhuff submitted, a therapist not only must be a skilled technician, he also must be "an open and flexible person possessed with a great amount of self-awareness and self-knowledge, sensitive and attuned to receiving and communicating vital messages with other persons" (p. 218). Within this context, becoming an effective therapist must involve a unique experiential process of interpersonal self-exploration, self-awareness and self-mastery. To this end, Truax and Carkhuff support the use of a "quasi-group therapy experience" in the training of therapists. The objectives they proposed were "first to give trainees experiential meaning for the role of therapist by their own participation as clients; and second, to provide an opportunity for self-exploration of their own goals, values, and experiences in relation to their emerging role as counselor or therapist" (p. 272). This was seen as a process which would facilitate the trainee's integrating his intra-interpersonal style with



the didactic and cognitive learnings about the role of therapist or counselor.

As Matarazzo (1978) concluded, the work of Truax and Carkhuff (1967) "1) presented a partial theory of the conditions essential to patient behavioral change; 2) included the development and some testing of instruments for measuring those conditions; 3) cited research to indicate that these conditions do foster constructive patient change, while their absence is a deterrent to constructive change; and 4) reflected, in particular training steps, specific attempts to foster the appropriate attitudes and behaviors among students" (p. 948). Further, Truax and Carkhuff (1967) integrate into their research and applications perspectives from social learning theory, behavior modification theory and programmed instruction. In framing the Rogerian approach in social learning and behavior modification terms, they concluded that therapists high in empathy, warmth and genuineness are personally more powerful positive reinforcers, and elicit high positive effect from clients through reciprocal effect. This increases the client's positive self-reinforcement, decreases anxiety, and increases positive effect toward others and reciprocally increases positive effect and reinforcement from others.



In the didactic-experiential training program proposed by Truax and Carkhuff (1967), students 1) were assigned an extensive list of readings from a wide variety of theorists and therapists; 2) were provided copies of scales for accurate empathy, nonpossessive warmth and genuineness, and assigned to observe and rate from tapes of psychotherapy sessions; 3) practiced making responses to tape recorded client statements; 4) formed dyads in which they alternated role playing therapist and client, which was recorded and rated on therapeutic conditions in supervisory sessions; 5) after qualifying in role play, interviewed real clients, which was recorded and rated; and 6) participated in a quasi-group therapy experience focused on exploration of their interpersonal style as related to their evolving role as therapists.

The work of Rogers and Truax and Carkhuff has focused on the development of the facilitative therapeutic interpersonal relationship. Gerard Egan (1976) proposes that the interpersonal skills necessary for developing the facilitative therapeutic relationship and the interpersonal skills necessary for developing authentic and intimate personal relationships are one and the same. Integrating the learning theory and training techniques of the t-group, the encounter group and the teaching of facilitative therapeutic relation-



ship skills to therapists, Egan has developed a systematic human relations training laboratory for training the skills of interpersonal living.

Description: The Systematic Human Relations Training Laboratory

Egan (1976, 1977, 1982) proposes that one's basic needs are fulfilled through interaction with others. For these interactions to be successful, one must develop effective interpersonal skills. Egan suggests that an interpersonal skill is more than the knowledge of the components of good communication. Egan (1976) states that effective interpersonal relations require "the skills to express yourself, to respond to others, to place legitimate demands on others, and to open yourself up to being influenced by others" (p. 17). Further, Egan (1977) submits that each interpersonal communication skill has three parts: 1) awareness, 2) communication know-how, and 3) assertiveness. From these basic perspectives, Egan (1973, 1976, 1977) presented a didactic-experiential program labeled the "systematic human relations laboratory". Egan (1977) suggests that learning is most effective if it is a "systematic" step-by-step process. He presented five steps: 1) instruction, 2) practice, 3) feedback, 4) encouragement or support, and 5) the use of new skills outside of the learning group. Egan (1973) utilizes not



only didactic instruction but also a form of experience-based education referred to as laboratory training. He describes the laboratory training as "a small group of people come together to assess their interpersonal strengths and deficits (diagnosis) and to experiment with effective forms of relating that have not been part of their day-to-day interactional style.... The participants "research" their own behavior and they experiment with new (hopefully more growthful or goal directed) behavior" (p. 7). It is also a laboratory in that it is an artificial setting instead of a natural one.

Egan (1973, 1976, 1977) emphasizes that the development of concrete goals is essential for effective systematic human relations training. To this end, he proposes that participants subscribe to a contract before entering the training that 1) defines the group experience and sets it apart from other kinds of small group processes; 2) makes concreteness, high visibility and clarity of goals standard rather than the traditional encounter group ambiguity; and 3) outlines the procedures and processes made on the participants and facilitator. Thus, the participants contract not only for the goals outlined, but also for the processes in which to achieve the goals. The core contract presented by Egan (1976) for his systematic human



relations training laboratory consists of three phases or stages:

Phase I, Part I: Learning the Skills of Relationship/Building: Trust and Risk. The techniques of Phase I training include didactic instruction, readings, programmed learning exercises and practice in one-to-one conversation with an observer present. Further, Phase I involves training two sets of skills: the skills of self-disclosure involving the risk of letting oneself be known to others, and the skills of responding based on empathic understanding which generates trust in relationships. The following outlines the skills trained in Phase I, Part I:

- A. The Skills of Self-Presentation
  - 1. Self-disclosure
  - 2. Concreteness
  - 3. The expression of feeling
- B. The Skills of Responding
  - 1. Accurate empathy
  - 2. Respect

Phase I, Part II: The Skills of Challenge. Feedback of alternate frames of reference is often confrontational and challenging to one's own (inner) frame of reference. The following outlines the skills which Egan presents as crucial to responsible and growth-producing challenge:

- 1. Identifying strengths
- 2. Advanced accurate empathy
- 3. Confrontation
- 4. Immediacy



Phase II: Group-specific Skills. The techniques of Phase II training involve progressively less structure. Although Phase II utilizes some of the training techniques of Phase I, the fishbowl or the modified fishbowl training technique is the core training process. This technique is central to the experimental research of this thesis and will be explicitly described in a later section. Group-specific skills are essentially the skills of applying the relationship skills of Phase I to the group setting. The skills of Phase II are the following:

1. Responding actively
2. Taking initiative in the group
3. Using primary-level accurate empathy
4. Self-disclosure
5. Owning the interactions of others
6. Using challenging skills
7. Calling for feedback.

Phase III: Pursuit of the Core Contract. Phase III consists of applying the skills learned from Phases I and II with minimum structure within an open group setting to accomplish the core experiential learning objectives of 1) examination of one's interpersonal style; 2) establishment and development of mutual empathic interpersonal relationships in which one can observe self and receive feedback from others; 3) acquiring and strengthening one's basic interpersonal skills; and 4) beginning to alter interpersonal style for more effective interpersonal living.



In summary, the systematic human relations training laboratory provides for the systematic training of the basic interpersonal skills necessary to facilitate optimum interpersonal communications and thereby maximize experiential learning. The laboratory further provides a graduated progression of settings in which interpersonal interactions occur to promote experiential learning. (See Appendix D for further descriptive specificity of the core contract utilized in the experimental research project of this thesis.)

Delimitation: The Fishbowl and Modified Fishbowl Techniques, Self-disclosure and Feedback

This thesis focuses on experimentally investigating the effects of the fishbowl and modified fishbowl techniques utilized by Egan to train group-specific interpersonal skills in Phase II of his program. The core objective is to determine the effects of the independent variable, fishbowl technique on the dependent variables, verbal self-disclosure and feedback.

Yalom (1975) states that "self-disclosure is a prerequisite for the formation of meaningful interpersonal relationships in a dyadic or in a group situation" (p. 360). Drawing from the philosophy of psychologists such as Sullivan and Rogers, Yalom maintains that self-acceptance must be preceded by



acceptance by others. He emphasized that for one to accept himself, he must permit others to really know him. Egan (1975) further suggests that the self-exploration required for increased self-awareness and self-acceptance calls for a high level of appropriate self-disclosure. Jourard (1971) concludes that "Every maladjusted person is a person who has not made himself known to another human being and in consequence does not know himself" (p. 32). Egan (1976) suggests that interpersonal self-disclosure is inhibited by societal, cultural and intrapersonal factors. He states that he believes dishonesty is practiced heavily in the American way of life and people are taught to conceal themselves. He maintains that dishonest practices in American competition, politics, advertising as well as sexism and stereotypic thinking are problematic to authentic self-disclosure and self-acceptance. Egan concludes that people avoid self-disclosure because of 1) the fear of self-knowledge which leads one to confront his real self in relation to his expected ideal self; 2) the fear of intimacy; 3) fear of responsibility and change; 4) the fear that if one reveals weakness he will be seen as all-weakness, a reverse halo effect; 5) the fear of guilt and shame; and 6) the fear of rejection. Within the context of these perspectives, producing facilitative conditions which promote disclosure of self



to self and others is crucial to combatting self-alienation and to releasing self-exploration, self-awareness, self-change and self-actualization. Cohen and Epstein (1981) consider that the basic aims of the training group are focused on permitting "members freedom to express feelings, perceptions and beliefs concerning themselves, other members or the group as a whole" (p. 493). Cohen and Epstein (1981) present an excellent conceptual discussion of the empathic communication process and the roles of self-disclosure and feedback in dyads and groups. They present three basic aims of therapy and training groups. They are to increase participants' awareness of 1) how they make sense of other persons, an intrapersonal process, and 2) how others make sense of them, an interpersonal process. They suggest that the first aim involves self-learning rather than learning about others. This involves a member exploring his beliefs, feelings and perceptions which influence his explanation of other persons' motives and behavior. They maintain that a crucial aspect of interpersonal relating is the "tendency to make attributions about others' motives." Further, they state that by disclosing these attributions which is normally seen as feedback to others, "it is likely that others will share their own intentions and feelings, and either correct misattributions or make it possible for



the parties to confront stressful interpersonal realities with an eye toward acceptance or change" (p. 495). Thus, feedback begins to be framed as a type of self-disclosure. The second aim, learning how others make sense of one's own behavior, is usually considered as evolving from the feedback of others' perceptions of the recipient. However, Cohen and Epstein again view this feedback as crucial self-disclosure in that the donors of feedback are "likely to reveal much more about themselves than about the recipient." The third aim, learning to make sense of oneself is an intrapersonal process of reflection much enhanced by interpersonally mutual exploration of the beliefs, values, feelings and perceptions in operation in the first two aims. This process is facilitated by empathic communication as free as possible from the distortions of biased attributions.

Cohen and Epstein present an analysis of the productive interaction of self-disclosure and feedback which they label as the "productive dialogue". They utilize the "Johari window" (Lufe, 1961, 1969) as a means of demonstrating their attributional point of view of self-disclosure, feedback and empathic communication. The "Johari window" is a four celled paradigm which is often used in human relations training to clarify the function of feedback and self-disclosure:



	Known to Jo	Unknown to Jo
Known to Harry	<div>1</div> <div>Known to both</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Harry's Jo requiring feedback</div>
Unknown to Harry	<div>2</div> <div>Jo's Jo requiring self-disclosure</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Unknown requiring therapy</div>

The goal of interaction is to increase cell #1, "known to both" through the use of self-disclosure and feedback. This is accomplished by Jo self-disclosing herself (i.e., reducing cell #2, "Jo's Jo") and by Harry giving feedback to Jo about herself (i.e., reducing cell #3, "Harry's Jo"). Cell #4, "unknown to both" was considered territory for therapy, not human relations training. Cohen and Epstein present a revised attributional version of the Johari window:

	Known to Jo	Unknown to Jo
Known to Harry	<div>1</div> <div>Perceptions available to both Harry &amp; Jo</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Harry's Jo Harry's Harry</div>
Unknown to Harry	<div>2</div> <div>Jo's Jo Jo's Harry</div>	<div>4</div> <div>The "real" Harry The "real" Jo</div>

Central to the attributional model of the Johari Window is the belief that individuals have distorted perceptions of themselves and others. They attribute self-definition and definition of others to beliefs,



values, feelings and experiences which are often unrealistic or false. Yalom (1975) refers to the process of unrealistic attribution as "parataxic distortion." Parataxic distortion often leads one to develop facades and biases of which one is often unaware. Cell #1 of the revised Johari window represents the perceptions, feelings and behaviors made available to both individuals in an interaction. Cell #1 is contaminated by intrapersonal parataxic distortions which may remain unknown to both individuals. Cell #4 represents the real individuals as if redefined free of parataxic distortions. To achieve interpersonal authenticity and self-acceptance, one must become aware of his/her real self, free of the parataxic distortions, and allow that real self to be known to others. This process reduces Cell #4, redefines and increases Cell #1. Rogerian-based approaches propose that a therapeutic relationship built on empathic communication will facilitate the mutual interpersonal exploration of disclosed perceptions, feelings and behaviors so that parataxic distortions can be eliminated, the authentic self can thus emerge and interpersonal and self-acceptance can be achieved. Before this mutual exploration can take place, personally relevant perceptions ("you and me") feelings and behaviors must first be disclosed. Cells #2 and #3



of the attributional Johari Window demonstrate that self-disclosure and feedback are both forms of revealing self, and that feedback may reveal more of the unknown self than direct self-disclosure does. There are two sources of knowledge one may reveal to another: 1) information about one's attributions about himself (i.e., self-disclosure), and 2) information about one's own attributions about the other (i.e., feedback). As the individuals interact their self-disclosures and feedback are validated or challenged and, therefore, they can begin to be confronted with the attributional base of their perceptions. As a product of the interaction of cells #2 and #3 (through self-disclosure, feedback, validation and challenge), cell #1 increases and awareness of attributional/parataxic distortions emerge. Through the processes of empathic communication, these awarenesses can then be explored and the authentic self can be discovered and accepted. The person then begins to relate interpersonally from a new perceptual base and is freed to move toward self-actualization.

Definitions: Self-Disclosure and Feedback. The following definitions of self-disclosure and feedback are proposed based on an attributional theory of interpersonal communication.



1. Interpersonal self-disclosure is defined as the occurrence of processes in which the sender presents, expresses and reveals self to the receiver.
2. Interpersonal feedback is defined as the occurrence of processes in which the sender presents, expresses and reveals self in reaction to the self-disclosure of the receiver.

This latter definition therefore frames feedback as a special form of self-disclosure.

The experimental investigation of this thesis focuses on the verbal process of interpersonal communication in which intra-interpersonally relevant self-disclosure and feedback, as dependent variables, are analyzed from the explicit content of language. (Also, see the review of the research literature and the observation manual, Appendix A, for further descriptive specificity of verbal self-disclosure and feedback.)

The ongoing interaction of verbal self-disclosure and feedback processes in a group of people makes available a greater number of interpersonal resources for self-exploration. It also increases the potential for achieving more accurate perceptions through consensual validations (Yalom, 1975). Egan (1976) maintains, in accordance with Wilmont (1975) that as the number of people increases arithmetically, relationships



are increased and complicated geometrically and ambiguity and disorganization occur. As disorganization occurs, individuals seek to regain a homeostasis of stability of focusing on resolving structure and leadership issues. Egan proposes the use of the fishbowl techniques to provide a means of graduated structure so that an uninterrupted flow toward increased interpersonal experiential involvement and global self-exploration may be maintained.

Definitions: Fishbowl and Modified Fishbowl Techniques. The "fishbowl" technique consists of forming two groups. The two groups may be formed from two separate training groups and their leaders, or may be formed from dividing one group into two. Each member of group A is assigned a partner in group B. When the A group interacts, the B group observes and vice versa. The "modified fishbowl" consists of only one group in which partners are assigned. This group always interacts as a whole with each partner having the additional role of specifically observing each other's interactions. Egan proposes that partners meet for five or six minutes before each group meeting. Each group member plans an agenda which his partner will observe. As one partner practices interacting, the other practices observation and discrimination. At the end of the group interaction, the partners give feedback to



each other. In this way, facilitative feedback objectively aimed at meeting the needs of the receiving partner is practiced. The overall group-specific objectives are to 1) decrease ambiguity and promote desensitization to group interaction, 2) promote goal-directed behavior through the concrete objectives of an agenda, 3) shape perceptual objectivity and the skills of interpersonal observation, thus facilitating a base for empathic understanding, and 4) shape the skills for communicating and exploring mutual interpersonal validation or confrontation. (For further descriptive specificity of the fishbowl and modified fishbowl techniques utilized for the experimental research project of this thesis, see the methodology section.)

### Hypothesis

The experimental study of this thesis focuses on the self-disclosure and feedback of graduate clinical psychology students who had completed Phase I and were participating in Phases II and III of a systematic human relations training laboratory similar to the one proposed by Egan (1973, 1976). The self-disclosure and feedback of an experimental group which utilized the fishbowl structures of Phase II was video taped, observed and rated. The resulting data were compared to the self-disclosure and feedback data of a control group which only utilized the open structure of Phase III. It



was expected that the mean rates of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback significantly increased over sessions for both groups but was significantly greater for each session of the experimental group than the control group.



## II. A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

### Introduction

This review of the research literature is divided into two sections. The first presents group process research which has addressed the use of techniques for structuring group interactions. Research studies were selected which present a high degree of descriptive specificity and equivalence between the conceptual and operational definitions of crucial variables and provide an overview of subjective and objective measurement procedures. The second section summarizes the developments of the research on self-disclosure and feedback.

The systematic human relations training laboratory proposed by Egan appears to effectively couple the dual interactive functions of 1) pretraining the interpersonal/communication skills necessary for facilitating effective group interaction and 2) structuring of group interactions to facilitate the experiential learning of interpersonal/communication skills as well as to initiate effective group process.



### Pretraining Interpersonal Skills

Although the pretraining of interpersonal skills for facilitating group interaction is not the specific focus of the experimental study of this thesis, it is a crucial part of the human relations training laboratory employed in the study. The research of D'Augelli and Chinsky (1974) addressed the pretraining of interpersonal/communication skills that facilitate group interaction. The purpose of their study was to examine two variables important to effective group performance: a) the interpersonal skills of group members and b) the type of pregroup instructions or pretraining received. In addressing the need for descriptive specificity of interpersonal skills, D'Augelli and Chinsky concluded that "studies conducted on interpersonal performance (e.g., Harrison, 1965; Stock & Luft, 1960) did not generally employ actual interpersonal behavior in their assessments of interpersonal function" (p. 65). To evaluate interpersonal competence precisely, they utilized a behavioral assessment procedure known as the Group Assessment of Interpersonal Traits (Goodman, 1972) to objectively score the occurrence of empathic understanding, emotional openness, honesty and acceptance-warmth.

The subjects were undergraduate students in introductory psychology courses. Initial procedures



were established to assess the interpersonal traits of each participant as they interacted in dyads consisting of a "discloser" of an interpersonal problem and an "understander" of the problem. From the results, the subjects were categorized as high in therapeutic talent or low in therapeutic talent. Subjects from each category were then assigned to groups receiving either 1) cognitive pretraining without practice, 2) similar cognitive pretraining with practice, or 3) control groups receiving no pregroup experience. The training consisted of a general orientation to sensitivity training and detailed instruction of the behaviors of 1) self-disclosure, 2) discussion of present group interactions (i.e., here and now focus) and 3) interpersonal feedback. After pretraining, the subjects participated in a group session.

The effects of interpersonal skill level and type of pretraining were studied by examining the discussion of each participant during the group session using a modification of Whalen's (1969) system for objectively rating verbal behavior in groups. (This system is quite similar to the one devised for use in the experimental research project of this thesis and is discussed more thoroughly in the section on the research on self-disclosure.) Trained raters scored the occurrence of



1) personal discussion, 2) impersonal discussion and 3) feedback from transcripts of the group sessions. The overall interrater agreement reported was 88 percent. A 2 x 3 analysis of variance design (Myers, 1966) was used to analyze the data. One factor consisted of the two levels of interpersonal skills (high and low): the other, the three types of pretraining (practice, cognitive and control). Also to compare the effects of pretraining versus control, the data from the practice and cognitive groups were merged and compared to the control groups. The results indicated that high therapeutic talent subjects engaged in significantly more personal discussion and feedback than the lower ones, and less impersonal discussion. The subjects receiving pretraining engaged in more personal discussion and feedback and less impersonal discussion than the control group. The results further indicated that the interaction of interpersonal skills and type of pretraining is important in producing effective interpersonal group behaviors. Subjects highly skilled interpersonally (i.e., empathic understanding, acceptance-warmth and emotional openness-honesty) who received cognitive pretraining engaged in more personal discussion and feedback than highly skilled members receiving either practice or control, although practice pretraining elicited



more than the control. For low skilled participants, the type of pretraining made no significant difference.

Besides being a representative study of objectively-based research on interpersonal skills and pretraining (also see the studies of the following section that reviews group training structures), this study holds important implications supportive of Egan's approach to human relations training. First, pretraining may significantly improve the occurrence of the behaviors necessary for effective group process. Second, if a person is first endowed with high level interpersonal skills, then pretraining for the behaviors necessary for effective group process may be more effective. This suggests that basic interpersonal skills need to be trained/learned first before training the skills of effective group interaction. Thus pretraining the interpersonal/communication skills necessary for facilitating effective group interaction becomes a two stage process. Further, the clarification of this two stage process is crucial to the descriptive specificity and delineation of the term "interpersonal skills". Group research literature is clouded by the fluctuating use of the term to mean empathic understanding, warmth-acceptance and emotional genuineness as well as appropriate self-disclosure and feedback.



A second issue significant to effective training deals with the structuring of group interactions to facilitate the experiential learning of interpersonal/communication skills as well as to initiate effective group process. This issue directly impacts the core objective of this thesis: the experimental investigation of the effects of fishbowl group structures utilized to facilitate effective group interaction.

### Research on Group Structures

#### Fishbowl Structure

No experimental investigation or empirical evidence could be found from the search for research literature on the effects of the fishbowl or modified fishbowl techniques. This status of the research was also validated by Gerard Egan (personal correspondence, 1981). The following are, however, examples of basic research on the use of structures for facilitating human relations training and group development which provide implications for the use of fishbowl techniques.

A central debate in human relations training has been over the degree of structure that is optimal for effective group development (Levin & Kurtz, 1974; Bednar & Kaul, 1978; Crews & Melnick, 1976; Egan, 1976). The traditional stand originating from the t-groups of the National Training Laboratories (Bradford, 1964), was



that a high degree of ambiguity and non-structure in the group environment generates optimal emotional involvement. T-group theory holds that this occurs because members attempt to bring order and security from the chaos and in the process reveal their characteristic modes of interpersonal functioning. T-group theory further holds that under ambiguous conditions, the group moves through a period of dependency on the leader, followed by rebellion and finally a resolution which has the potential of promoting a high level of group cohesiveness and productivity (Bennis & Shepard, 1956). Many contemporary theorists disagree with the efficacy of the traditional point of view. Levin and Kurtz (1974) supported the views of Bach (1954) and suggested that "structured exercises reduce the anxiety over free expression, facilitate participation by less verbal members and provide the opportunity to try new behavior" (p. 526). Bednar and Kaul (1978), in a review of research literature on group structure, presented the findings of Bednar and Lee (1976) and Bednar, Melnick and Kaul (1974). Bednard and Lee suggested that ambiguity and lack of clarity tend to be associated with increased anxiety and diminished productivity and learning in a variety of settings. Bednar, Melnick and Kaul argued that higher structure increases the likelihood of risk taking by group members without encumbering



them with responsibility for the consequences of these actions. Their model suggested that group development proceeds through the following developmental phases: 1) initial ambiguity, 2) increased structure, 3) increased risk taking, 4) development of group cohesion, and 5) increased personal responsibility. The model supported the use of structure to initiate constructive group interaction. Bednar and Kaul (1978) concluded from their review that essentially three processes have been employed in the experimental conditions of structured exercises to prepare clients for groups. These are role-induction interviews and information dissemination, vicarious behavioral training, and direct practice of target behaviors.

A wide variety of dependent variables have been explored in relationship to the three experimental conditions employed. The most frequently explored dependent variables are self-disclosure and feedback, although they have been defined in diverse ways and from diverse perspectives. (Self-disclosure is comprehensively reviewed under the next section.) Other dependent variables have included group process ratings, group behaviors, group cohesion, interpersonal personality traits, anxiety ratings, self-perceptions, perceptions of the group experience and attitudes toward the group (Bednar & Kaul, 1978).



### Pregroup Structure

Bednar and Kaul (1978) present an unpublished study by Evenson and Bednar (1976) which represents investigations of the effects of specific pregroup structures on early group development. Evensen and Bednar utilized a randomized design with a 2 x 4 factorial arrangement. This included high and low levels of risk taking and four levels of pregroup preparation structure. A cognitive structure condition consisted of an audiotape teaching participants why sharing personal feelings was effective in becoming personally intimately acquainted and emphasized open and immediate self-disclosure. A behavioral practice condition consisted of taped instructions directing interactive activities. These activities provided practice in self-disclosure and feedback and included practicing this with a partner. A combined cognitive and behavioral condition was utilized as a third level. A control condition of minimal structure where participants were told the purpose of the workshop was to become better acquainted was established as the fourth level. Risk taking disposition was measured by a scale developed by Jackson, Hournay and Vidmar (1971). High and low risk taking was operationally defined as falling one-half standard deviation from the group mean. The procedure significantly separated the two groups which were then



randomly assigned to structure conditions. After the pregroup structures were employed, an unstructured interpersonal relations workshop followed.

Three classes of dependent variables were used to assess the treatment effects. Group behavior was measured by the Hill Interaction Matrix (Hill, 1965). A trained rater reviewed audiotapes of the groups and achieved a 96 percent reliability level. Self-disclosure and feedback were rated on the Perceived Depth of Interaction Scale (PDIS) developed for the project. The PDIS was a self-report instrument consisting of 10 five-point items with five representing the greatest amount of quality. Group cohesion was measured by the Gross Cohesion Scale (Gross, 1957), which is a seven-item self-report instrument.

The results indicated that high levels of risk taking were related to higher levels of interpersonal communication, group cohesion and perceived depth of interaction. More importantly, behavioral structure, alone and in combination with cognitive structure, seemed to facilitate performance in the workshops. A significant risk X structure interaction was found for each dependent variable. The analysis suggested that this was mainly attributable to the differential effects of behavioral structure on high and low risk taking participants. The pregroup behavioral practice was most



productive with the high risk participants. The high risk takers showed highest levels of communication, cohesion and perceived self-disclosure and feedback.

### Continuous Group Structure

The research of Levin and Kurtz (1974) focused on participant perceptions following structured and unstructured human relations training. One of their objectives was to present experimental evidence in support of the correlational study of Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (1973). Lieberman, Yalom and Miles found that participants in high exercise groups saw their groups as more cohesive and constructive, felt they had learned more as a result of their group experience, and perceived their leaders as more competent and understanding than did participants in low exercise groups. Yet the members of the high exercise groups had a significantly lower outcome than did the members of the lower exercise groups.

The subjects of the Levin and Kurtz study consisted of students enrolled in a graduate course entitled Introduction to Group Counseling. The group counseling course required participation in a small human relations training group experience in addition to class instruction. Leaders were recruited from advanced graduate students enrolled in a course entitled Practicum in Group Facilitation. Three leader team/pairs were formed



with Team 1 having a combined total of more than 25 group experiences as either leaders or participants, and Teams 2 and 3 having a combined total of less than 10 group experiences. Students were randomly assigned to six groups. Three experimental groups employed structured formats while three control groups utilized no structural formats. Groups were formed through random assignments. The structured exercises were chosen to provide opportunity for giving and receiving feedback and to promote an atmosphere of psychological safety. A manual of instruction of group exercises for the group leaders was constructed from those presented by Otto (1970), Pfeiffer and Jones (1969, 1970, 1971, 1972), Malamud and Machover (1965) and Steiner (1970). The non-structured format was designed to parallel traditional human relations training. The leaders were instructed to assume an inactive and nondirective role early in the group's life, assign major responsibility for the group's direction to the members themselves, and thus create an ambiguous group atmosphere. A modified form of the Group Opinion Questionnaire developed by Kapp, Gleser, Brissenden, Emerson, Winget and Kashdan (1964) was used to assess participant's perception of their group experience. The instrument was designed to compare different groups on three dimensions: ego involvement in the group assessed, self-perceived



personality change since joining the group and perceived group unity.

The results indicated that the participants in structured groups reported higher levels of ego involvement in their group, greater self-perceived personality change since joining their groups and greater perceived group unity. The author concluded that greater ego involvement and perceived unity, in the structured group, may have resulted from a greater opportunity for participation as well as requiring member participation. They further concluded that perceived personality change may have resulted from a greater opportunity to try out new behaviors in the structured group as well as the providing of a psychologically safe atmosphere which facilitated permission for and after required and insured honest feedback, expression of feelings and confrontation.

The preceeding study addressed the effects of structured exercises utilized during the course of group interactions and does not specifically address the use of initial structured exercises to facilitate the development of group process.

#### Initial Group Structure

The research of Crews and Melnick (1976) focused on the comparative use of initial and delayed structure in



facilitating group development. Further, this study explored the effects of structure on the dependent variables of member anxiety, group cohesion and quality of interpersonal interaction. This study also assessed the differential effects of structure on high and low socially anxious subjects. The subjects were juniors and seniors enrolled in an encounter group course at the University of Kentucky. Subjects were assigned to balanced groups on the basis of sex and previous experience. The authors served as non-directive facilitators. Two groups were formed for each of three treatment conditions: an initial condition received structured exercises in Sessions 1, 2, and 3; a delayed structure condition received the same exercises in Session 5, 6, and 7; and a no-structure condition received no structured exercises. Before group sessions began, a measure of social anxiety, the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (Watson & Friend, 1969), was administered.

A randomized design with a 3 x 2 factorial arrangement of treatments with repeated measures was employed. Four measures of dependent variables were utilized: 1) The Gross Cohesiveness Scale (Gross, cited in Schutz, 1975) contained questions of member satisfaction with the group. The group cohesiveness score is the total number of cohesive statements accepted by group members. 2) Semantic differential scales



consisted of four concepts designed to assess feelings about self-disclosure, giving and receiving interpersonal feedback and group cohesion. Adjective pairs were selected from Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957). 3) The Hill Interaction Matrix (1965) categorized individual statements into 16 levels of interaction. Statement content (topic, group, personal or relationship) and process (conventional, assertive, speculative or confrontive) are categorized. Ratings were made from audio tapes of the group meetings by an expert rater who had achieved a 95 percent reliability level with the matrix. 4) The Situational Anxiety Scale consisted of four questions assessing member anxiety associated with being in the group at the present time. All groups met for eight three-hour sessions. At the beginning of each meeting the subjects received the Situational Anxiety Scale. The structured conditions consisted of three exercises. "Helping and Consulting" (Kolb, Rubin & McIntyre, 1974) provided directions for a practice in effectively giving and receiving help from another. "Personal and Interpersonal Perceptions" (Kolb et al., 1974) emphasized self-disclosure and feedback. "Seven Questions" (National Training Laboratories, 1969) offered an opportunity for giving and receiving interpersonal feedback.



The self-report outcome measures from the Situational Anxiety Scale indicated that subjects in the initial structure condition claimed more anxiety than subjects in the no structure condition. High socially anxious subjects reported more situational anxiety than low socially anxious subjects. Responses to the semantic differential scales indicated that ratings of self-disclosure varied with self-rapport of social anxiety. Low anxiety subjects rated their self-disclosure more positively than high anxiety subjects. Subjects rated their feedback from the group more positively in later than early sessions. No differential effects for cohesion were measured from the Gross Cohesiveness Scale or semantic differential scales.

The behavioral outcome measures were rated on the Hill interaction Matrix as follows: a) the initial half hour of the first meeting to serve as a baseline and b) the middle half hour of Sessions 3,4,7 and 8 to assess quality of interaction. Four measures were analyzed: a) percentage of self-disclosure (rated as personal speculative or confrontive); b) percentage of interpersonal feedback (rated as relationship speculative and confrontive); c) percentage of group confrontation; and d) the total percentage of these types of statements combined. A measure of the overall effects of structure was provided by using the mean



percentage of each type of interaction for Session 3 and 4 as the first occasion and 7 and 8 as the second occasion. The initial structure condition proved to be superior to other conditions at Occasion 1 in amount of self-disclosure, but at Occasion 2, there were no differences. Self-disclosure increased over time with both delayed and no-structure groups disclosing more at Occasion 2 than 1. Group confrontation fell from Occasion 1 to 2. Overall, the groups engaged in more work-level interaction at Occasion 2 than 1; for the delayed structure, this change was significant.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated for intercorrelations among dependent variables. Correlation of cohesion and self-report measures indicated that individuals who viewed their interactions positively viewed the group positively. Group cohesion and member anxiety were positively correlated in later sessions. Individuals who rated themselves more anxious rated their groups more highly cohesive. Member anxiety was positively correlated with behavioral measures of interaction.

Crews and Melnick concluded that "the results support the formulation of Bednar, Melnick and Kaul (1974), who suggest that the systematic use of structure may be beneficial in initiating groups by clarifying the group task and enabling clients to engage rapidly in



appropriate interactions" (p. 97). The study indicated that the initial structure elicited more self-disclosure, but that this difference disappeared among groups in later sessions. This study did not obtain the same increase for interpersonal feedback and confrontation. The authors suggest that these variables may be more difficult to increase and may require a more explicit structure.

Crews and Melnick expected the initial structure to be associated with the greatest reduction in anxiety. Instead, members of the initial structure rated themselves as most anxious. Increased anxiety was correlated with high-level interaction, more positive assessment of interaction and stronger group cohesion.

The authors concluded that "the distinction between state and trait anxiety is relevant to the effects of structure on anxiety in groups" (Spielberg, 1972) (p. 97). Situational anxiety was defined as a form of trait anxiety. High socially anxious members had more situational anxiety and were less satisfied with their self-disclosure. Analysis of the audiotaped interactions did not reflect these differences. Crews and Melnick concluded that "it may be high social anxiety contributes to dissatisfaction with interpersonal interaction which in turn increases the level of state and trait anxiety. Individuals caught in the cycle may be the ones for whom



group participation, while painful, is most beneficial" (p. 97).

One further conclusion is considered important. Crews and Melnick expected that higher quality interaction shared by members of groups receiving initial structure would be accompanied by increased cohesion. Regardless of structure, level of cohesion was positively associated with member assessment of group interaction and unrelated to behavioral measures of interaction. The development of cohesion was associated with interaction perceived as high quality by group members, but not necessarily with interaction assessed as high quality.

Bednar and Kaul conclude that research of this type "warrant the tentative assumption that different levels of structure may have powerful effects on group development, especially in the early stages" (p. 795). Further, they submit that research on group structure "must consider the nature of the participants and their expectations, the nature of the treatment offered, and the measurement modality employed" (pp. 795-796).

As has been presented, the measurement and analysis of the effects of group structures on the occurrence of self-disclosure is a core issue in the experimental investigations of group theories and practices. The



following section further addresses the state of the development of concepts and research on self-disclosure.

### Research on Self-Disclosure

#### Introduction

The previous sections of this thesis have addressed the basic definitions and theoretical process formulations which have been forwarded in the literature generally relevant to self-disclosure. Further, the section on the research of group structure has presented representative samples of the investigations of the effects of group structures on self-disclosure. This section presents a selected review of the literature which specifically addresses the measurement and analysis of self-disclosure and variables which effect it.

The concept of self-disclosure has evolved into a multidimensional construct (Chelune, 1978; Cozby, 1973; Resnick & Amerikaner, 1980). Five parameters have been identified: 1) amount or breadth of personal information; 2) degree of intimacy or depth; 3) the time dimensions related to rate and duration; 4) the affective/emotional quality; and 5) the overall flexibility or inflexibility of a person's disclosing behavior in varying social contexts (Chelune, 1975). As Bednar and Kaul (1978) note, a common misconception is that self-disclosure can or cannot occur. They conclude that self-disclosure occurs constantly and quote the



assertion of Watzlawick, Beaven and Jackson (1967): "If it is accepted that all behavior is an interactional situation...in communication, it follows that no matter how one may try, one cannot not communicate. Activity or inactivity, words or silence, all have message value; they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot not respond to these communications and are themselves communicating" (pp. 48-49).

Communication occurs when behaviors occurring singly and in combination are patterned and encoded with meaning and then perceived by another who knows how to decode the meaning from the patterned behavior (Lindsay and Norman, 1972). The number of behaviors and combinations a person is able to elicit is astronomical and thus the complexity of analyzing a person's self-disclosure has thus focused on verbal self-disclosure. Verbal self-disclosure is, in and of itself, extremely complex. Pitch, tone, volume and rhythm/articulation all can be patterned and encoded with meaning. Language is an example of combinations of these verbal behaviors which have been patterned and encoded with meaning. The majority of the literature and research on self-disclosure has focused on the self-disclosure occurring through the medium of language. Analysis of self-disclosure through language is still very complex in that encodings of meaning are multidimensional. The ex-



pression of the self-disclosive meaning in a spoken word is very different than that in a written word. Further, there are multi-levels of meaning occurring in language which are based not on the concrete content of the words but on the figurative use of the words such as in metaphor and simile. Overall, an analysis of language-based self-disclosure is a complex undertaking, one that most probably will require isolation of many more parameters than the five thus far proposed in the research literature, and will require advancements in the analysis of the encoding and decoding schemas in interpersonal interactions.

Measurement of self-disclosure can be accomplished from the perspective of the sender, the recipient or neutral objective observers (Resnick & Amerikaner, 1980; Goodstein and Reinecker, 1974). Disclosure as perceived from the perspectives of the sender or receiver may be significantly different from the actual disclosure that occurs in the interpersonal interaction when viewed by a neutral observer (Cozby, 1973; Goodstein & Assoc., 1974; Resnick & Amerikaner, 1980; Eland, Epting & Bonarius, in press).



The sender or receiver has typically been given self-report questionnaires, inventories, rating scales or projective techniques. The most well-known assessment tool is the Jourard self-disclosure questionnaire (JSDQ) (Jourard, 1964, 1968, 1971). The JSDQ initially consisted of six ten-statement categories of aspects of self including attitudes and opinions, tastes and interests, work, money, personality and body. Subjects indicated the degree to which they had revealed the information to four target persons: mother, father, best opposite-sex friend and best same-sex friend. The instrument has undergone alterations as to number of items, rating scale and the target persons. Many investigators and reviewers have questioned the predictive validity of the JSDQ self-report and questionnaires like it (Cozby, 1973; Vondracek, 1969a, 1969b; Resnick & Amerikaner, 1980; Ehrlich & Graeven, 1971) and have been unable to find significant relationships between many of the self-perception based self-report questionnaires and actual self-disclosure. They have unanimously recommended the use of behavioral assessment techniques which include coding systems, rating scales, and questionnaires which require actual self-disclosure within an interpersonal context. Chelune (1975) concludes: "The development of a uniform definition of self-disclosure, in terms of relevant dimensions, and



with the construction of standard methods of measuring these dimensions, is a crucial problem to be resolved if self-disclosure is to remain a viable area of research" (pp. 79-80).

Within the context of forwarding the development of the concept of self-disclosure, this thesis 1) presents foundational definitions of self-disclosure which are based on an attributional theory of interpersonal interaction and thus classified feedback as a form self-disclosure (p. 26); 2) proposes new parameters to be considered in the measurement and analysis of self-disclosure (p.59); 3) presents an observation system for behaviorally measuring and analyzing the actual occurrence of self-disclosure (Appendix A); and 4) experimentally investigates the effects of specific group structuring techniques on the occurrence of self-disclosure (pp. 63-103).

#### Basic Parameters and Measurement

Self-disclosure, as with most behavior, may be measured and analyzed in terms of frequency, duration, rate, as well as degree on content or process continua. On the basis that self-disclosure is a complex and multidimensional entity, the development of parameters representative of content and process continua would appear to be central to the development of the specific



operational descriptions necessary for framing self-disclosure as a construct.

Early research on self-disclosure was content oriented along three parameters: 1) amount, 2) depth or intimacy, and 3) duration (Cozby, 1973). As previously presented, the earliest attempts at assessing these parameters were carried out utilizing subjective, self-report questionnaires and rating scales. An example of an early methodology for objectively scoring the three parameters of self-disclosure was presented by Whalen (1969). Whalen developed the observed system to be utilized in a study which "assessed the relative efficacy of modeling and instructional approaches in increasing interpersonal openness in a group setting" (p. 509). The methodology consisted of ratings of five major verbal response classes, four of which were further broken down into sub-classes for a total of 18 response categories. The categories are as follows:

1. Personal discussion: a) personal self-disclosure, b) immediate feelings, c) neutral feedback;
2. Feedback: a) positive feedback, b) negative feedback, c) neutral feedback, d) accept feedback, e) request feedback;



3. Impersonal discussion: a) impersonal self-disclosure, b) extragroup process, c) impersonal questions;
4. Group process;
5. Descriptive aspects of communicative speech: a) agreement, b) disagreement, c) laughter, d) silence, e) interruption;
6. Unscorable utterances.

The rating procedure consisted of two trained raters who independently categorized each utterance that occurred in discussion. An Esterline-Angus event recorder was utilized for a continuous record of both the frequency and the duration of each utterance in each category.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were transformed, using Fisher's Z coefficients, so that they could be averaged across conditions within each category. The mean Z's were computed into corresponding correlations which were then used for evaluating the reliability of the system. A mean coefficient of .75 was selected as the criterion for acceptable reliability. Sixty-six (66) percent of the correlation coefficients were at or above .90 and ninety-one (91) percent reached .75.

In summary, Whalen's system objectively measured 1) frequency, 2) direction and 3) a narrow continuum of



depth or intimacy consisting basically of two degrees, personal discussion and impersonal discussion.

Chelune (1975) recognized that the three parameters of amount, duration and depth or intimacy, were insufficient and forwarded the development of process conceptions of self-disclosure by proposing process continua based on two new dimensions of parameters: the emotional or effective manner of presentation, and the flexibility of the disclosure pattern. In discussing the effective manner of presentation, Chelune concluded that "while an individual may disclose the facts of his experience to other persons, if he suppresses their effect, he cannot become truly known to others" (pp. 81-82). He goes on to suggest a simple scaled method for coding the effective change along a three-point continuum: a score of 1 being a defensive, mechanistic presentation indicating effect suppression; a score of 2 being given if no decision can be determined; and a score of 3 when the manner of presentation is spontaneous and effective indicating the person is expressing feelings congruent with the related experiences. Chelune also recognized the high degree of subjectivity necessary in rating such a continuum, but suggested a gross index of affective presentation could be achieved.



Building from the proposals of Benner (1968) and West (1971) that self-disclosure is carefully modulated on the basis of demographic characteristics of the discloser, the target of disclosure, the social situation, the topic of disclosure, and the relationship between sender and receiver, Chelune concludes that flexibility of the disclosive pattern is a crucial variable. This flexibility refers to the degree to which an individual can adequately differentiate the interpersonal variables and adapt his disclosure accordingly. Chelune(1974) constructed a self-report inventory designed to assess a person's level of self-disclosure in a number of social situations. A gross indication of the amount of variability or disclosure flexibility is obtained through computing the standard deviation. Such analysis of the flexibility of disclosure is needed to provide evidence in regard to Jourard's (1964) assumption that an optimal level of disclosure for a given situation is correlated to mental health. This assumption suggests a curvilinear relationship such that a high discloser would appear egocentric and a low discloser would appear socially withdrawn, but an appropriately moderate discloser would be well-adjusted.



### Proposal of Additional Parameters

A significant component in the experimental methodology of this thesis is the proposal of two additional dimensions of disclosing behavior which from a review of the literature appear not to have received the attention of researchers. The first is the cognitive frame in which a disclosure is presented, and the second is the interpersonal affiliation/individuation frame in which a disclosure is presented.

The cognitive frame of presentation refers to the manner in which the self-disclosure reflects the discloser's cognitive perspective on the disclosed information. A disclosure may be a simple observation (e.g., "I am over-emotional because I don't think about what I am going to do."), a judgemental evaluation (e.g., "I think I'm a lousy person."), or a decision (e.g., "I am going to stop being so aggressive.") (For more thorough definitions and examples, see the Methodology section and Appendix A for the methodology proposed for observing and scoring self-disclosure and feedback.) The manner in which an individual cognitively perceives, conceptualizes and processes himself and his interactions with others may be as significant if not more significant than the content of his perceptions. This appears to be particularly crucial to experiential group interaction where



exploration of how one thinks, and confrontation of faulty thought processing patterns, may be as important as exploration and confrontation of what one thinks.

The second dimension proposed, the interpersonal affiliation/individuation frame of presentation, refers to the manner in which the discloser affiliates, includes or triangulates others in his disclosure or feedback as compared to separately owning and individuating his disclosure or feedback. This dimension may be particularly significant to systems and structural analyses and interventions as proposed by such therapists as Murry Bowen (1978) or Salvador Minuchin (1974). Affiliation, or coalition inclusion is often represented by statements referring to we, us or you and I (e.g., "We feel anxious about sitting here, don't we?"). Triangulation may be presented in such statements as "Bill is really angry about what you just said." In these examples, the disclosers are speaking for others. Individuated communication may be represented by "I" statements (e.g., "I don't like what you said" or "Bill, I think you're angry."). Such communication is direct and often interpersonally immediate.

The methodology developed for this thesis for observing and scoring self-disclosure and feedback is similar to Whalen's (1969) with the addition of categories representing the cognitive frame of



presentation and coding symbols representing the affiliation/individuation frame of presentation. The parameter of affective congruence is not included in the methodology but could be added very easily. The parameter of flexibility of disclosure pattern is also not addressed since only one situation, disclosure in an experiential training group, is observed.

### Factors Affecting Self-Disclosure

Reviews of Cozby (1973) and Resnick and Amerikaner (1981) summarize the factors affecting self-disclosure in two categories, personality variables and social-situational variables. Family interaction patterns, parenting practice, birth order, sex, race, cultural background and setting and personality correlates of self-disclosure have been analyzed in studies of personality variables affecting self-disclosure. Investigators of social-situational factors affecting self-disclosure have analyzed the effects of social exchange and penetration processes which emphasize interpersonal reward/cost facts, social modeling processes, reciprocity of self-disclosure, the relationship between discloser and recipient, the characteristics of the recipient, the content or topic of self-disclosure and the setting in which disclosure takes place.



The experimental investigation of this thesis focuses on the personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback of graduate clinical psychology students in the setting of experiential process groups which were part of a systematic human relations training laboratory. The effects of fishbowl group structures on the self-disclosure and feedback are analyzed.



### III. METHOD

#### Subjects

The subjects were 16 graduate clinical psychology students who were enrolled in a group counseling course at the University of Central Florida entitled "Clinical Intervention II, Counseling Theory and Process, (CLP6457)". Participation in one of two weekly experimental interpersonal process groups was required in addition to the weekly class lectures on the theory and practice of group counseling. All students had completed a prerequisite course entitled "Clinical Intervention I, Introduction to Counseling Theory, (CLP6456)" in which they received interpersonal skills training and experience in dyadic helper-helpee interactions. The training received through the sequence of the two courses encompassed the three phases Egan (1976) proposed for his systematic human relations training laboratory. While interacting in the helper/helpee dyads of the prerequisite introduction to counseling course, each subject's interpersonal skills competency was rated by the instructor. The subjects' responses were rated along a five point continuum adapted from Carkhuff and Berensen (1967) (see Appendix B) indicating the global



degree of facilitative effectiveness of each helper response.

Prior to their assignment to the groups, the subjects were also assessed utilizing Schutz's (1967) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B) (see Appendix C). The FIRO-B is a measure of a person's characteristic behavior toward other people on the dimensions of inclusion, control and affection. It assesses two aspects of behavior in each dimension, the behavior an individual expresses toward others and the behavior he wants others to express toward him. It is comprised of six scales: expressed inclusion, wanted inclusion, expressed control, wanted control, expressed affection, and wanted affection. Combinations of scores are associated with general behavioral descriptions and labeled to represent the interpersonal style (i.e., "The Rebel", "The Cautious Lover", and "Mask of Intimacy".)

The subjects were matched in pairs according to their scores on the FIRO-B, sex and their global level of interpersonal skills competency. The members of each pair were then separated and placed one in each group. After the two matched groups had been formed, one was randomly selected (coin toss) to be the experimental group and the other became the control group. The instructor of the group counseling course who was an



experienced non-directive group leader served as the facilitator in both groups.

### Treatments Procedure

Pregroup instructions. Each subject received the following pregroup instructions: a) a release form providing a description of the research project, the subject's role as a participant, the subject's rights, and the agreement for release of information and data was discussed with each subject and finalized with their signature (see Appendix C), b) each subject was provided with a pregroup contract which outlined the purpose of experimental group interaction and the goals and objectives for individual participation (see Appendix D), c) each subject received log sheets and instructions on how to develop personal agendas for their participation in each group session and how to summarize their participation in and impressions of each group session (see Appendix E). The experimental group and control group then proceeded under the following formats.

Experimental Group. The experimental group met as an experiential interpersonal process group with the group facilitator over nine weekly 1-1/2 hour sessions. The experimental group proceeded through the three conditions of the group fishbowl format (I. Fishbowl,



II. Modified fishbowl, III. open structure) (Egan 1978). The fishbowl format consists of structured group interactions which progressed from a highly structured phase to a semistructured phase to the minimal/open structure (see Figure 1).

I. Highly Structured Phase: Fishbowl (3 weeks).

The group was divided into two subgroups. Each member of subgroup A was assigned a partner in subgroup B. This phase proceeded as follows: 1) (10 minutes) Partners met in dyads. Member B helped member A to clarify goals and agenda. 2) (30 minutes) Subgroup A members met with the facilitator and Subgroup B members observed their partners. 3) (10 minutes) Partners met again in dyads. Subgroup B members gave feedback to subgroup A members. 4-6) Repeat of 1-3 with the partners in reverse roles.

II. Semi-Structured Phase: Modified Fishbowl (3 weeks). The group was no longer divided into subgroups but met as one group. Partners were still assigned, however. This phase proceeded as follows: 1) (35 minutes) The total group met and interacted. 2) (10 minutes) Partners met in dyads sharing mutual feedback and clarification of goals and agendas. 3 & 4) Repeat of 1-2. This phase thus consisted of a total of 2 group periods and 2 dyad-goal/feedback periods.



	Phase I			Phase II			Phase III		
Session:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Partner dyads								
	10 minutes								
	Group A interacts				Total group interacts				
	Group B observes			35 minutes					
	30 minutes								
	Partner dyads			Partner dyads			Total group interacts		
	10 minutes			10 minutes					
	Group B interacts			Total group interacts			90 minutes		
	Group A observes			35 minutes					
	30 minutes								
	Partner dyads			Partner dyads					
	10 minutes			10 minutes					

Figure 1. Experimental group: treatment phases



III. Open Structured Phase (3 weeks). The group met for 1-1/2 hours each session in a non-structured open group interaction.

Control Group. The control group met as an experiential interpersonal process group with an open structure. To maintain equivalent amounts of group interaction time, corresponding to the group interaction time of the experimental group, the control group met for 60 minutes in Phase I, 70 minutes in Phase II, and 90 minutes in Phase III (see Figure 2). The group members and the facilitator were to utilize the nonstructured open group interaction to mutually work toward the goals as outlined in the group contract (see Appendix E).

#### Data Collection

Video Taping Procedure. The experimental and control group interactions were video taped in equivalent time periods. On the basis of limited funds for purchasing video tapes, recording was limited to a maximum time of 60 minutes for each session. In Phase I of the experimental group, the 30 minute interaction of subgroup A and the 30 minute interaction of subgroup B was video taped for each session (see Figure 3). In Phase I of the control group, the 60 minutes of interaction was video taped for each session (see Figure 3).







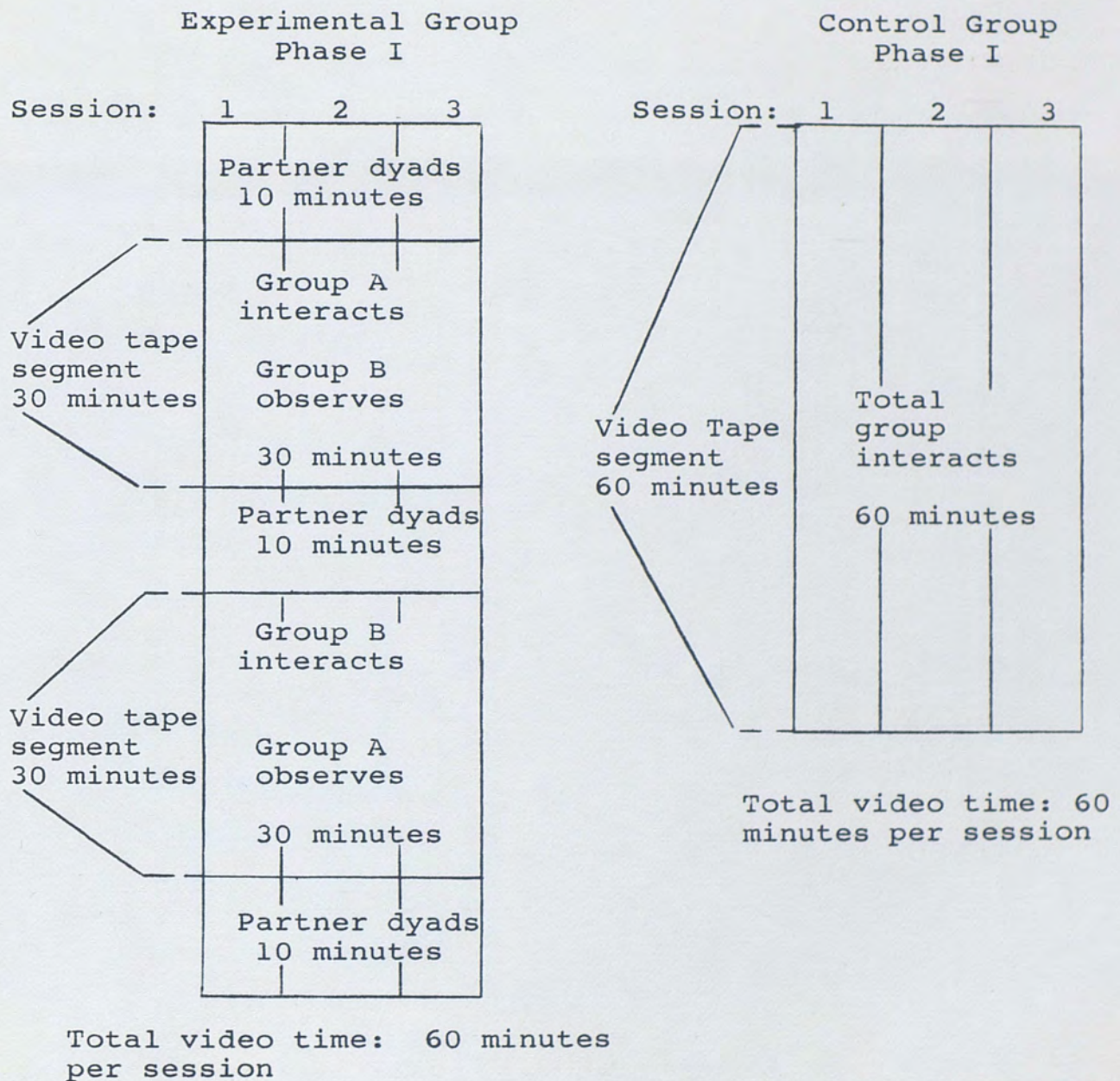


Figure 3. Video tape segments of the group interactions of phase I.



In Phase II of the experimental group, the first 30 minutes of the first 35 minute group interaction and the last 30 minutes of the second 35 minute group interaction was video taped for each session (see Figure 4). In Phase II of the control group, the first 30 minutes and the final 30 minutes of the 70 minute group interaction was video taped for each session (see Figure 4).

In Phase III of the experimental group and the control group the middle 60 minutes of the 90 minute group interaction was video taped (see Figure 5).

Dependent Variables. The dependent measures consisted of objective behavioral ratings of self-disclosure which were divided into two major verbal response classes, self-disclosure and feedback. An Observation Manual for Scoring Verbal Self-Disclosure and Feedback in Interpersonal Process Groups (see Appendix A) was developed in which the response classes, division, categories and subcategories are defined and comprehensively demonstrated with multiple examples. The methodology was designed so that each occurrence of self-disclosure and feedback could be scored continuously so that the first parameter, the amount or frequency could be calculated for the sample of time of an observation. The two major response classes, self-disclosure and feedback, were each subdivided into two divisions,



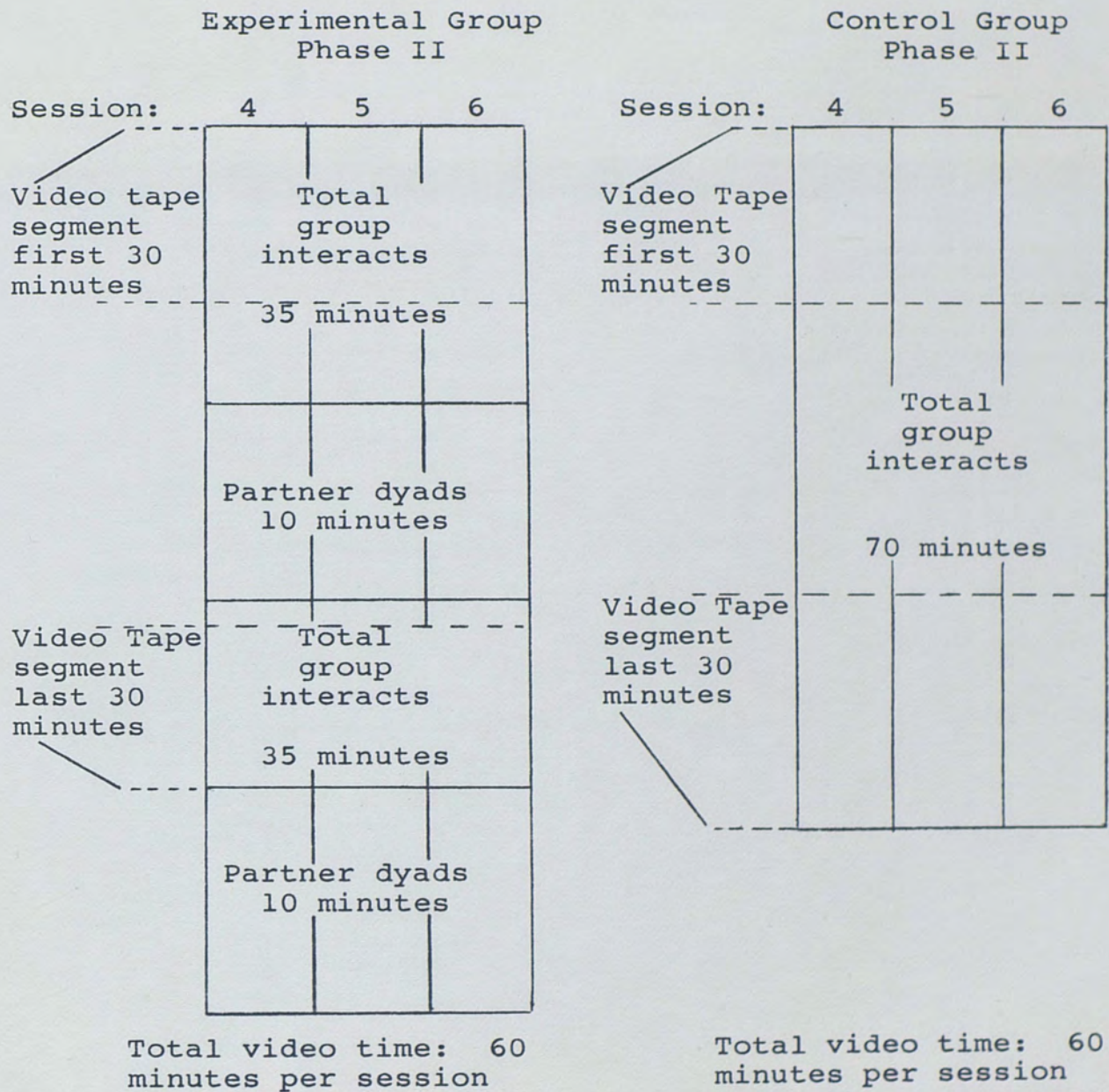


Figure 4. Video tape segments of the group interactions of Phase II.



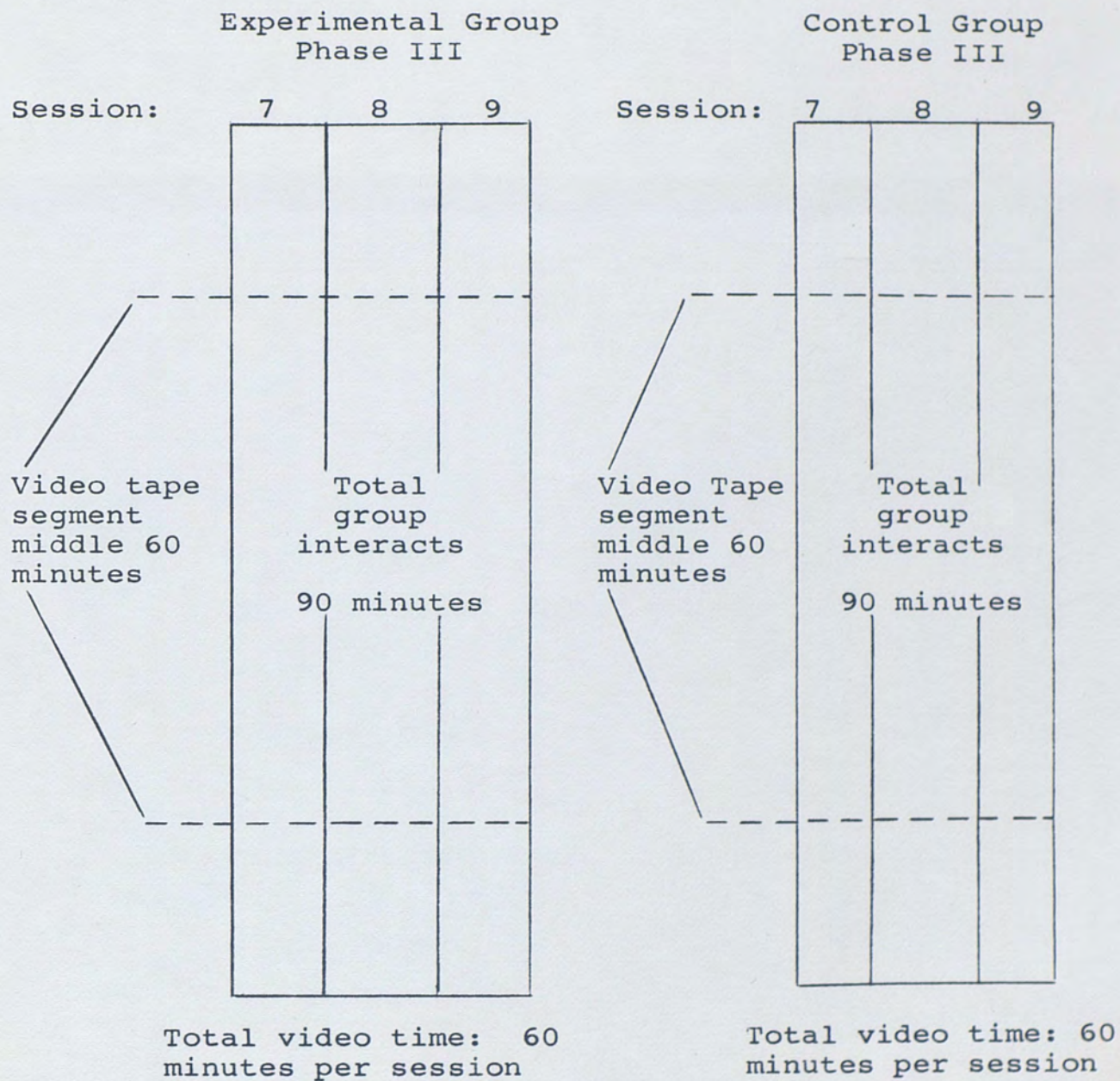


Figure 5. Video tape segments of the group interactions of Phase III.



personally relevant and miscellaneous which provided two basic levels of rating the second parameter, the depth or intimacy. The division of personally relevant self-disclosure and the division of personally relevant feedback were then subdivided into categories which created multiple levels of rating the third parameter, the cognitive frame of presentation. A summary of those categories follows:

### Self-Disclosure

- I. Personal Self-Disclosure (PER): A verbal response in which a group member describes his own
  - a. personality/intrapersonal style/intrapersonal experience/intrapersonal beliefs and values.
  - b. interpersonal style/interpersonal experience/ interpersonal beliefs and values.
  - c. feelings and emotions.
- II. Evaluative Self-Disclosure (EVLS): A verbal response in which a group member states a judgemental perspective of reward or criticism of his behavior, emotion or cognition.
- III. Analytical Self-Disclosure (ANLS): A verbal response in which a group member states his intention or decision to behave, emote or think in a certain way.



IV. Decisional Self-Disclosure (DECS): A verbal intention or decision to behave, emote or think in certain ways.

V. Behavioral Self-Disclosure (BEHS): A verbal response in which a group member describes his actual physical behavior which may be representative of an experiential action.

VI. Request for Self-Disclosure (REQS): A verbal response in which a group member asks for self-disclosure from other members.

### Feedback

I. Personal Feedback (PERF): A verbal response in which a group member describes his personal perspective of other group members'

a. personality/intrapersonal style/intrapersonal experiences/intrapersonal beliefs and values

b. interpersonal style/interpersonal experiences/interpersonal beliefs and values

c. feelings and emotions.

II. Interpersonal Feedback (IEPF): A verbal response in which a group member describes his experiential reaction evoked by another member's behavior, emotion or thoughts.

III. Analytical Feedback (ANLF): A verbal response in which a group member conveys his personal



perspective of cause and effect of correlational relationships which act on the behavior, emotion or cognition of the other members.

IV. Evaluative Feedback (EVLf): A verbal response in which a group member states a judgemental perspective of reward or criticism of the other group member(s) and their behavior, emotion or cognition.

V. Directive Feedback (DIRF): A verbal response in which a group member conveys his personal perspective of what the behavior or experience of the other member should be. This is conveyed as advice, suggestion, commands, warnings, permission or other statements of directed norms and values.

VI. Behavioral Feedback (BEHF): A verbal response in which a group member describes actual physical behavior of the other members which may be representative of their experiential reactions.

VII. Request for Feedback (REQF): A verbal response in which a group member asks for feedback from other members.

Miscellaneous Information (MIS): All verbal self-disclosure and feedback which is not scorable in the other categories.

Each response in each category was scored utilizing symbols which were coded to represent levels of the



fourth parameter, 4) the affiliation/individuation frame of presentation. The symbol (X) indicated that the response was direct feedback to another individual in the group or was owned self-disclosure. The "indirect" symbol (I) indicated that the response was feedback indirectly given by using the third person (i.e., he, she, it) instead of the second person (i.e., you). The "partial" symbol (%) indicated that the response was feedback given to two or more members of the group but not to the group as a whole. The "whole" symbol (O) indicated the response was feedback given to the group as a whole. The "affiliation" symbol (W) represented "we" or "you and I" statements which indicated a group member included himself in the feedback he was giving.

#### Rating Procedure

Four psychology students were taught the coding system and received extensive practice scoring prepared examples, role plays and video tapes of group therapy sessions lead by Carl Rogers and Richard Farson. Each observer was required to achieve an average .80 interrater agreement with the author who served as the trainer and standard rater before they were allowed to observe the target video tapes. The interrater reliability figure was calculated as the overall percentage of agreement between a rater and the standard rater across all responses scored per subject (Kelly 1977).



Practice reliability was determined from raters scoring 2 subjects at a time from 30 minute samples of group therapy tapes in training sessions. The trainer did not stop or review the tapes until the end of each 30 minute period. During observation of the actual target tapes the raters were allowed to stop and review at will.

The two raters with the highest reliabilities were paired with the two raters with the lower reliabilities. One pair was randomly assigned (coin toss) to observe the experimental group and the other to observe the control group. Each rater was then assigned four subjects to observe in pairs. The raters were blind to whether their group was the experimental one or the control and had no prior knowledge of the treatment conditions. Raters were instructed to observe only one pair of subjects at a time. Tapes were numbered for each session, one through nine. The order in which raters observed the video tapes was randomized for each pair of subjects using a table of random numbers.

As the standard observer, the author rated the group facilitator in each group interaction of the experimental group and control group.

The author also rated sample video segments consisting of the first thirty minutes of three sessions of group interaction for each of the two pairs of subjects assigned to each rater for the purpose of determining



interrater reliability. One sample video segment for each of the two pairs of subjects was randomly selected from the three sessions in each treatment phase. This yielded three sample reliability observations per subject, one from each of the three treatment phases. Since each rater had been assigned four subjects to observe, the reliability procedure yielded four reliability observations for each rater for each of the three treatment phases for an overall total of twelve reliability observations for each rater.

### Design and Analyses

A two-factor mixed design was utilized with two levels on one factor consisting of the experimental group and the control group with matched subjects and nine levels on the second factor consisting of the nine sessions for each group. Repeated measures of the frequency of the multiple categories of self-disclosure and feedback were scored for each subject over each of the nine sessions. Each subject's frequency score for each category was converted to represent the average rate per minute of the occurrences for each category for each session.

Analyses of variance for two factors with repeated measures on one factor were computed for the two main dependent variable classes, self-disclosure and feedback. Analyses of variance were also computed for the



categories, personal feedback, interpersonal feedback and miscellaneous information.

T-tests for related measures were computed for the facilitator's rate per minute scores for the two main independent variable classes, self-disclosure and feedback in the experimental versus the control group.

Final analysis of the subject data consisted of chi-square tests for independence calculated from phi coefficients for 2 x 2 tables. Grand medians were separately calculated for self-disclosure and feedback. Two frequency scores representing the number of subjects with rates above a grand median and below a grand median were calculated for each session. The frequency scores were combined across sessions to represent the number of each group's subjects scoring above a grand median and below a grand median for each treatment phase. 2 x 2 tables for each treatment phase were then constructed representing the relationship between the experimental and control group and the number of each group's subjects scoring above or below each of the grand medians for self-disclosure and feedback.



#### IV. RESULTS

Due to a malfunction of the recording equipment, the audio portion of session five was severely contaminated by electrical interference. This interference made it possible to observe and score the group interaction of session five and thus eliminated it from being included in the data analyses. The data analyses were based on a total of eight sessions with three sessions for Phase I, two sessions for Phase II, and three sessions for Phase III.

##### Interrater Reliability

Table 1 presents the interrater reliabilities obtained for the four raters for the two main dependent variable classes, self-disclosure and feedback, and three categories: interpersonal feedback, personal feedback and miscellaneous. The average interrater reliability for the experimental group was .79 for the class of self-disclosure; .76 for the class of feedback; .81 for the category of personal feedback; .75 for the category of interpersonal feedback; and .79 for the category of miscellaneous information. The average interrater reliability for the control group was .77 for



the class of self-disclosure; .73 for the class of feedback; .78 for the category of personal feedback; .70 for the category of inter-personal feedback; and .75 for the category of miscellaneous information.

#### T-tests on the Facilitator's Scores

Table 2 presents the facilitator's mean rates for overall self-disclosure and feedback for the experimental and control group along with the summaries of the corresponding t-tests. The t-tests produced no statistically significant results. There was no significant difference between the facilitator's interaction with the experimental group as compared to his interaction with the control group.

#### Analyses of Variance on the Subjects' Scores

Tables 3,4,5,6, and 7 present the mean rates for overall self-disclosure (Table 3), overall feedback (Table 4), and the categories of personal feedback (Table 5), interpersonal feedback (Table 6) and miscellaneous information (Table 7) for each session of the experimental and control group along with the summaries of the corresponding analyses of variance.

The analysis of variance for the mean rates in the category of personal feedback (Table 5) indicates a significant session main effect ( $F(1,7) = 2.157, p = .044$ ). The pattern of this session effect does not appear to



Table 1

Interrater Reliability Means\*: Percentage of Agreement  
with Standard Rater

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4
Class: Self-Disclosure	.80	.78	.79	.75
Class: Feedback	.78	.75	.77	.69
Category: Personal Feedback	.82	.80	.80	.76
Category: Inter-personal Feedback	.76	.74	.76	.64
Category: Miscellaneous	.81	.77	.80	.71

\* The average of the twelve percentage of agreement scores calculated from the twelve reliability observations on each rater.



Table 2

Facilitator's Mean Rates of Overall Self-disclosure and Feedback with the Results of the Corresponding T-tests

(Class: Self-disclosure)

	Experimental Condition	Control Condition
N	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.88	.78
SD	.37	.22

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Treatment	.043	1	.043	.456	
Error	1.322	14	.094		
Total	1.365	15			

(Class: Feedback)

	Experimental Condition	Control Condition
N	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.45	.45
SD	.14	.25

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Treatment	.000	1	.000	.005	
Error	.577	14	.041		
Total	.577	15			



support the core hypothesis that the mean rates would increase across all sessions.

The analysis of variance for the mean rates in the category of interpersonal feedback (Table 6) indicates a significant treatment by session interaction ( $F(1,7) = 2.561, p = .018$ ). The pattern of this interaction also does not appear to support the core hypothesis that the mean rates of the experimental group would be greater than those of the control group for each session.

The analysis of variance for the mean rates in the category of miscellaneous information (Table 7) indicates a significant treatment main effect ( $F(1,7) = 5.51, p = .032$ ). The mean rates of occurrences scored in the category of miscellaneous information were significantly lower for the experimental group than the control group.

#### Chi-Square Tests on the Subjects' Scores

Table 8 presents the summaries of the chi-square tests along with their corresponding 2 x 2 tables of the number of subjects' overall self-disclosure and feedback rates above and below the grand median for each phase of the experimental and control group. Only the chi-square test on self-disclosure in phase I indicated a relevant relationship between that treatment condition and number of subjects' rates above or below the corresponding



Table 3

Subjects' Mean Rates of Overall Self-disclosure with the  
Corresponding Analysis of Variance

(Class: Self-disclosure)

Experimental Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	1.35	1.64	1.45	.84	.60	1.03	.45	.72
SD	.91	1.65	1.17	.74	.62	.86	.50	.62

Control Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.80	.58	.94	.67	.71	.89	.86	.61
SD	.91	.83	.48	.63	1.06	.68	.58	1.07

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Between Blocks/Subjects					
Treatment	2.081	1	2.081	1.720	.208
Error	16.940	14	1.210		
Within Blocks/Subjects					
Session	5.731	7	.819	1.145	.341
Treatment x Session	5.692	7	.813	1.137	.346
Error	70.083	98	.715		
Total	100.527	127			



Table 4

Subjects' Mean Rates of Overall Feedback with the  
Corresponding Analysis of Variance

(Class: Feedback)

Experimental Group								
Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.61	.54	.65	.64	.52	.58	.36	.44
SD	.46	.26	.42	.73	.49	.42	.31	.48

Control Group								
Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.32	.35	.78	.61	.32	.51	.38	.75
SD	.32	.26	.64	.41	.31	.39	.30	1.00

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Between Blocks/Subjects					
Treatment	.054	1	.054	.065	
Error	11.559	14	.826		
Within Blocks/Subjects					
Session	1.554	7	.222	1.421	.204
Session x Treatment	1.063	7	.152	.972	
Error	15.309	98	.156		
Total	29.539	127			



Table 5

Subjects' Mean Rates in the Category of Personal Feedback with the Corresponding Analysis of Variance

(Category: Personal Feedback)

Experimental Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.40	.38	.50	.44	.34	.35	.24	.33
SD	.28	.08	.34	.51	.33	.24	.21	.39

Control Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.22	.20	.51	.45	.24	.34	.20	.45
SD	.23	.17	.47	.33	.25	.26	.15	.61

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Between Blocks/Subjects					
Treatment	.063	1	.063	.144	
Error	6.107	14	.436		
Within Blocks/Subjects					
Session	.965	7	.138	2.157*	.044
Treatment x Session	.292	7	.042	.652	
Error	6.266	98	.064		
Total	13.694	127			



Table 6

Subjects' Mean Rates in the Category of Interpersonal Feedback with the Corresponding Analysis of Variance

(Category: Interpersonal Feedback)

Experimental Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.06	.07	.03	.06	.07	.08	.04	.02
SD	.05	.11	.03	.06	.10	.07	.06	.03

Control Group

Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.04	.08	.14	.06	.00	.11	.08	.17
SD	.03	.12	.09	.04	.00	.18	.13	.20

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Between Blocks/Subjects					
Treatment	.034	1	.034	1.523	.236
Error	.317	14	.023		
Within Blocks/Subjects					
Session	.050	7	.007	.934	
Treatment x Session	.137	7	.020	2.561*	.018
Error	.751	98	.008		
Total	1.290	127			



Table 7

Subjects' Mean Rates in the Category of Miscellaneous Information with the Corresponding Analysis of Variance

(Category: Miscellaneous Information)

Experimental Group								
Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.12	.04	.08	.06	.02	.04	.00	.02
SD	.13	.08	.09	.06	.04	.04	.03	.05

Control Group								
Session:	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
$\bar{X}$	.15	.10	.12	.08	.18	.17	.10	.19
SD	.16	.05	.16	.18	.16	.23	.10	.19

Source	SS	df	ms	F	p
Between Blocks/Subjects					
Treatment	.184	1	.184	5.513*	.032
Error	.467	14	.033		
Within Blocks/Subjects					
Session	.091	7	.013	.953	
Treatment x Session	.074	7	.011	.770	
Error	1.338	98	.014		
Total	2.153	127			



Table 8

2 x 2 Tables of the Number of Subjects' Scores per Treatment Phase that are Above or Below the Grand Median Rates for Overall Self-disclosure and Feedback with the Corresponding Chi-square Tests

(Class: Self-disclosure)

Grand median rate = .59

	Above median	Below median	Above median	Below median	Above median	Below median
Experimental Group	18	6	8	8	12	12
Control Group	9	15	5	11	12	12
	Phase I		Phase II		Phase III	
	Phi = .38 x <sup>2</sup> = 6.86 df = 1 C = .35 *p<.07 x <sup>2</sup> >3.8		Phi = .19 x <sup>2</sup> = 1.17		Phi = 0 x <sup>2</sup> = 0	

(Class: Feedback)

Grand Median Rate = .44

	Above median	Below median	Above median	Below median	Above median	Below median
Experimental Group	15	9	8	8	11	13
Control Group	12	12	7	9	12	12
	Phase I		Phase II		Phase III	
	Phi = .13 x <sup>2</sup> = .76		Phi = .06 x <sup>2</sup> = .13		Phi = .04 x <sup>2</sup> = .08	



grand median ( $x_{2(1)}=6.86, p .01$ ). In Phase I, the number of self-disclosure rates above the grand median was proportionately higher for the experimental group than the control group.

### SUMMARY

Even though the chi-square tests indicate a relevant relationship between treatment conditions and the mean rates of overall self-disclosure in Phase I, the analyses of variance indicate no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in support of the core hypothesis. One factor, the large amount of variability in the data, appears to have had a major influence on the results and is presented as a central issue in the discussion section.

The only statistically significant result obtained by the study that indicated an overall pattern of difference between the experimental and control group occurred in the mean rates in the category of miscellaneous information. The experimental group produced a significantly lower amount of miscellaneous information in each session than the control group.



## V. DISCUSSION

### Introduction

The results of the analyses of variance do not support the hypothesis that the mean rate of overall personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback would significantly increase over sessions for both groups but would be significantly greater for each session of the experimental group than the control group. In this study, interactions in the experiential training groups was not shown to significantly increase the rate of personally relevant self-disclosure or feedback over successive weekly group sessions whether structured or unstructured. Further, the fishbowl structures employed in the experimental group were not shown to produce a significantly greater rate of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback for each session of the experimental group than the control group.

The large amount of variability in the data was considered as a possible factor significantly influencing the results. Chi-square analyses were chosen to provide another perspective on the relationship between the treatment groups and self-disclosure and feedback based on a procedure less influenced by the variability.



The influence of the variability in the subjects' rates was reduced by categorizing the rates simply as scores above or below the grand median. The chi-square analyses based on these scores for self-disclosure indicated a significant relationship between the treatment groups and self-disclosure in Phase I but not in Phase II or III. The number of rates for overall self-disclosure above the grand median was proportionately higher in Phase I of the experimental group than the control group. These results suggest that if rater, facilitator, subject and other intervening variables were effectively controlled, then the initial fishbowl structure of Phase I was significantly related to increased self-disclosing behavior. No significant relationship between the treatment groups and feedback was indicated for any of the treatment phases. Although the results of the analyses of variance did not produce findings of statistical significance to support the findings of Crews and Melnick (1974), the results of the chi-square analyses support their findings that initial structure elicited more self-disclosure with differences disappearing between groups in later sessions. Further, Crews and Melnick also did not obtain the same increase of feedback or confrontation as they did for self-disclosure.



As previously suggested, rater, facilitator and subject variables would have to have been comprehensively controlled before a significant relationship between the fishbowl structure and self-disclosure could be concretely established from the chi-square analyses. Intervening variables were not comprehensively controlled in this study. A thorough discussion of such variables and their possible influence on the variability in the data and on the overall results will be presented later.

This study utilized an observation procedure which focused on scoring frequency of occurrences in broad categories representing personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback. These broad categories did not directly discriminate interpersonally process quality continua such as those of the parameter and depth of intimacy. An observation system for depth of intimacy would need to include categories of self-disclosure and feedback which would discriminate various levels of such facts as personally relevant content, empathy, immediacy and confrontation. The scoring system utilized in this study did provide for a broad discrimination of depth of intimacy through a two degree contrast of quality consisting of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback versus miscellaneous information. The results of



the analyses of variance on the mean rates in the category of miscellaneous information, indicated that the experimental group had a significantly lower mean rate of occurrences of miscellaneous information across sessions than the control group. This would suggest that the subjects who interacted through the progression of fishbowl structures maintained a more consistent depth of intimate involvement in terms of a lower ratio of miscellaneous information to personally relevant statements than did the control group.

In the preceding introductory summaries of the interpretations of the results, three conditions emerge which are considered central issues for discussion. First, variables may have been confounded to produce a large amount of variability in the subjects' rates of self-disclosure and feedback which may have cancelled out the differential effects of the fishbowl structures. Second, this study focused on analyzing quantities of self-disclosure and feedback rather than the interpersonal process qualities (i.e. continuums of empathy, immediacy, etc.) of these variables. Again, variables specific to this study may have intervened to interact with and minimize the effects of the fishbowl structures as well as sessions so as to equalize and maintain the levels of the quantity of self-disclosure and feedback



for each group. Third, the results indicated a significant difference in the consistency of depth of intimacy between the groups (i.e. lower levels of miscellaneous information in experimental group). This finding suggests that the fishbowl structures may also have a variety of effects on the intimacy of personal involvement and thus may also impact various qualities of self-disclosure and feedback which could not be directly assessed by the scoring system used in this study.

#### Intervening Variables

Given the consistency and levels of the interrater reliability scores (Table 1, page 83), each rater's reliability was considered adequate enough not to significantly produce error variability in the data.

There was no significant difference in the facilitator's rates of self-disclosure and feedback between groups or across sessions. This may suggest that fluctuations in his interactions with the group were not factors interacting with the subjects to create large variability in their rates of self-disclosure and feedback. This may not be a valid assumption, however, in the light that the quality of his self-disclosure and feedback may have fluctuated which would not have been detected by the present scoring system. Fluctuations of this type may have interacted with various subjects at



various times to produce a large amount of variability in their rates of self-disclosure and feedback.

Perhaps the most significant feature of this study which could have had wide ranging influence on the results was the fact that the subjects were peers in a small graduate clinical psychology program. The subjects came to the graduate program from a variety of different cultural backgrounds including various states, jobs and academic institutions. Their ages ranged from the early twenties to the late fifties. They were in their first year of interaction together at the time of their participation in the groups. Subjects were, for the most part, all in the same classes and tended to frequently study and socialize together as a group. Within this context, it can be assumed that they were forming and interacting in various friendships and subgroups outside of their participation in the groups. They were all involved in a group counseling theory course which continually impacted their knowledge, concepts and perceptions about group process during the time they were participating in the experiential lab groups. Each subject had completed a training course in basic interpersonal/communication skills during the previous term and although an attempt was made to match subjects based on a pregroup global five point rating of



interpersonal skill level, they may have had significantly varying levels of interpersonal communications talent and skills competency within a group situation. They may have had significantly different risk taking dispositions and skills as well as varying levels of trait and social anxiety. The process of being video taped and observed may have had significantly varying impact on the subjects. Further, their motivation to interact on a personally intimate basis with the facilitator, who was one of their major professors, may have significantly varied.

The studies presented earlier in the research review contain evidence of the varying impact that structured interactions may have on the group performance of subjects with varying interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics. Crews and Melnick (1976) found that high socially anxious subjects had more situational anxiety under group structure conditions which resulted in higher levels of their interactions with their group.

In their study of pregroup structure, Evensen and Bednar (1976) found that subjects with high risk taking dispositions had higher levels of group interaction after participating in structured pregroup behavioral practice than subjects with low risk taking dispositions.



D'Augelli and Chinsky (1976) found that subjects with a high level of interpersonal talent/skills had higher levels of group interaction particularly after participating in pretraining structures than did subjects with low levels of interpersonal talent/skills.

After a comprehensive review of the research on group structures, Bednar and Kaul (1978) concluded that personality variables interacting with group structure significantly effected the results. The subjects of the present study, responding under the influence of the interactions of the multitude of variables previously presented, may have had individually different reactions to the fishbowl structures at varying times over the sessions. The overall effect may have been to produce variability at levels which cancelled out any trends which could have been produced by the influence of the fishbowl structures.

Given that the intervening variables and the subjects's susceptibility to them could not be comprehensively controlled, an attempt was made to balance subject types between the experimental and control group by matching subjects in terms of a broad measure of their interpersonal orientation and personality type utilizing the FIRO-B (Schutz, 1967). Analyses of this personality data and the interaction of personality types with



treatments and sessions were not conducted for the purposes of this study. The use of FIRO-B procedure to balance and match the groups may have been another significant factor affecting the results. Future data analyses will focus on the interaction between FIRO-B orientation and level of feedback and self-discipline.

The subjects were not matched and balanced utilizing pre-evaluations of group interpersonal skills, anxiety, risk taking disposition, etc. The groups may have been significantly different in their pretreatment rates of self-disclosure and feedback. If the experimental group had lower pretreatment rates of self-disclosure and feedback, then the fishbowl structures may have promoted those rates to a level of no difference with the control group. If the experimental group had higher pretreatment rates of self-disclosure and feedback, the fishbowl structures may have inhibited those rates to a level of no difference with the control group, although this seems unlikely given the results.

It is believed that the use of students in a graduate clinical psychology program may have minimized potential differences due to the structuring techniques. The advanced level of knowledge, experience, pretraining and motivation for interpersonal risk taking and exploration may have neutralized the effects that the fishbowl structures would otherwise have had on a less



advanced subject population. All of the subjects had completed a course of interpersonal skills/communication training the previous semester. The course consisted of the components of Phase I of the the three phase systematic human relations training laboratory presented by Egan (1976). (Also see page 16 of this thesis.) Part I of Phase I consisted of learning and practicing the skills of relationship building through didactic instruction, programmed learning exercises and practice in one to one helper/helpee dyads. This part focused on developing a high level disposition of risk taking through the skills of self-disclosure as well as generating trust through the skills of accurate empathy and respect. Part II of Phase I consisted of developing a high level disposition of risk taking through the skills of confrontational feedback. As previously presented, Evensen and Bednar (1976) found that subjects with high risk taking dispositions had higher levels of group interaction. D'Augelli and Chinsky (1974) found that subjects with a high level of interpersonal skills had higher levels of group interaction particularly after pretraining. Bednar and Kaul (1978) concluded from their research review that subjects who possessed higher levels of interpersonal functioning responded more favorably to lower structure demands while less adequate subjects responded more favorably to higher structure



demands. The subjects may have advanced to levels of interpersonal functioning beyond those which could be significantly influenced by interaction in the fishbowl structures. Further, Crews and Melnick (1976) found that high socially anxious subjects had higher levels of group interaction when impacted by the higher situational anxiety produced by group structure. The subjects of this study may have been sufficiently desensitized to such anxiety. In their previous course of interpersonal skills training they had each interacted in several dyads which were video taped and observed and judged by the instructor and other students. Indeed, this component of previous behavioral practice, filming, group observation and group feedback may have been instrumental in neutralizing the effects of the fishbowl structures and is considered a prime target for further research.

The impact of Phase I of the training laboratory proposed by Egan (1976) on graduate clinical psychology students as opposed to less advanced subjects, may be such as to eliminate the need for utilizing the fishbowl structures of Phase II (see page 19 of theses), to initiate the application of group-specific skills. These students may be able to progress directly to Phase III and the pursuit of the core contract. Further, in this study the impact of the previous training of Phase



I and the use of the core contract of Phase III may have been to advance the subjects' levels of interpersonal functioning such that their overall rates of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback were maintained across sessions for both groups to provide a base of interaction in which greater depths of personal process involvement could evolve.

Ribner (1974) conducted a study of the effects of an explicit group contract (Egan 1970) on self-disclosure and group cohesiveness. The subjects were unmarried male undergraduates. Experimental groups utilizing the contract were compared to control groups which were not presented a contract. The results indicated that the contract served to significantly increase both the frequency and depth of self-disclosure as well as cohesiveness. Similar to the experimental results of this thesis, Ribner also reported a significant amount of variability of self-disclosing behavior in the groups. He concluded that "the contract helped the group members deal with personal issues while allowing for a plasticity essential to a group designed for personal growth" (p. 119).

Both the experimental group and the control group of this thesis were presented an explicit group contract (see Appendix D). The use of this contract interaction



with the previous experience and training of the graduate students may have promoted levels of self-disclosure and feedback beyond the impact of the fishbowl structures. Further, in contrast to the results reported by Ribner (1974), who used untrained undergraduates, the rates of self-disclosure and feedback of the graduate students may have been advanced to group levels which were equalized and maintained while, similar to Ribner's results, the depth of self-disclosure and cohesiveness (i.e., personal process involvement) may have been increasing.

#### Personal Process Involvement

Broome (1984) conducted a thesis study of the depth of personal process involvement utilizing the same subjects, group sessions and video tapes used in this study. Raters were trained to observe and score the subjects interactions from the video tapes utilizing a modified version of the interpersonal process scale developed by Rogers (1958). The scale consisted of seven continua used to rate the depth of process involvement. They were 1) feeling and personal meaning; 2) manner of experiencing; 3) degree of incongruence; 4) communication of self; 5) manner in which experience is construed; 6) relationship to problems; and 7) manner of relating. Broome's primary hypothesis that the depth



of process involvement would be greater in the experimental group, was not supported. Broome did find, however, that the depth of process involvement for all subjects in both the structured and unstructured group conditions significantly increased over time. Broome concluded that the study "experimentally validates the training group methodology as an effective paradigm for teaching group process and interpretive skills vis-a-vis the experiential learning of effective group behaviors " (p. 32).

Thus, while Broome did not find greater depth of process involvement in the experimental group, and while this study did not find a significantly greater quantity of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback in the experimental group, this study did find significantly lower rates of miscellaneous information occurring in the experimental group and disproportionately high levels of self-disclosure in the experimental group in Phase I. It may be that the fishbowl structures were less influential in promoting personally relevant interaction, process involvement or depth of intimacy with the present subjects, but instead inhibited their opposites as evidenced by the lower occurrence of miscellaneous small talk.

This may suggest that the experimental group was less involved in what Schutz (1958) called "goblet



issues". These are superficial issues which are not very important to the groups members but function to allow them to gradually and safely get to personally know one another. Since both groups had no significant difference in overall quantity of self-disclosure and feedback, it would appear that the control group had more overall interaction since it had more miscellaneous talk occurring. This may suggest that the experimental group had more silent periods of contemplation or avoidance behavior or alternatively, longer durations of the occurrence of relevant self-disclosing or feedback statements. The implications suggest that further research needs to focus not only on what is happening but also on what is not happening. The inclusion of observing silence as well as activity along with measures of duration are needed for more accurate interpretation of the processes occurring in groups. Further, future research needs to focus on the relationship between the quantity of self-disclosure and feedback and their quality. It seems that the ultimate question for research is whether there are optimum levels of interactions between the quantity and qualities of self-disclosure and feedback which will produce maximum effectiveness of the group process for any given population. Further, what techniques will promote this optimum interaction?



## Conclusions

Although a significant difference was not found in the overall rates of personally relevant self-disclosure and feedback between the experimental and control groups, a significant relationship was indicated between the treatment groups in Phase I and the level of self-disclosure. Several possible conditions may have existed to minimize expected differences between groups. 1) A multitude of intervening variables may have produced variability in the data at levels which cancelled the significant effects of the fishbowl structures; 2) in the absence of pre-testing of interpersonal group skills, anxiety, risk taking dispositions, etc., the subjects of the experimental group may have had lower pre-treatment rates of self-disclosure and feedback than the control group which were promoted to the level of no difference by the fishbowl structures; 3) the subjects of the experimental group may have had higher pre-treatment rates of self-disclosure and feedback than the control group which were inhibited to the level of no difference by the fishbowl structures; 4) specific interactions between certain interpersonal styles and structuring techniques may have occurred but were masked by the lack of such relationships for other group members. For example, only those subjects relatively anxious and uncomfortable in relating in groups may have



been impacted by the fishbowl structure while the structure was an irrelevant or even frustrating intrusion for subjects comfortable in relating to others in a group situation; 5) The subjects of the experimental and control groups may have been well balanced with personality traits and interpersonal skills which were advanced beyond those which could be significantly influenced by the fishbowl structures.

Before final conclusions about the effects of fishbowl structures can be determined, future research is needed which emphasizes the comprehensive isolation and control or balancing of intervening variables. Further, comprehensive pretreatment evaluations of subject variables are necessary not only to accurately balance subjects, but also to provide points of reference for determining interactions between the fishbowl structures and subject variables.

The graduate clinical psychology students were provided a two course sequence of training at the University of Central Florida: 1) Clinical Intervention 1, Introduction to Counseling Theory, (CLP 6456) and 2) Clinical Intervention 2, Group Counseling Theory and Process, (CLP 6457). This two course systematic human relations/counseling skills training laboratory presented to the graduate students by John M. McGuire, Ph.D., had specific conditions which are considered



significant to further research on systematic training laboratories as well as fishbowl group structures. In the first course, the video taping of the students while they participated in the helper/helpee dyads and the subsequent viewing of the tapes by class members and the professor with interactive discussion and feedback may have produced a pseudo-fishbowl condition. Agendas for practicing the skills of self-disclosure and feedback were produced, structured interactions and group observations were produced, and feedback pertaining to the effectiveness of each student's interaction were presented. Given that the students had already participated in fishbowl-like structures in the first course, the need for utilizing fishbowl structures to initiate group interaction in the second course may have been eliminated.

In the second course, the use of the explicit group contract from the beginning of the experiential process groups may also have eliminated the need for the fishbowl structures particularly for the level of interpersonal functioning of the pretrained graduate students.

The results of this study further indicated a significant difference in the consistency of the depth of intimacy as reflected by the experimental group's lower rates of the occurrence of miscellaneous information. This finding suggests that the fishbowl structures may



have other effects on qualities of the interpersonal process involvement which could not be detected by the scoring system utilized by this study. The findings support the views of Chelune (1976) who suggests that future scoring systems for self-disclosure and feedback need to encompass parameters of 1) amount; 2) duration; 3) depth of intimacy; and 4) effective manner of presentation, so that the interactions of these variables may be analyzed. The scoring system proposed in this study is considered a primitive model which is intended to serve as a base for further evolution. The two new parameters the cognitive frame and the interpersonal affiliation/individuation frame of presentation of self-disclosure and feedback which were proposed in this thesis (p, 59) were not a focus of analysis in the experimental study. Future research is called for which will utilize these parameters in analyses of experiential group process and outcome in terms of changes in how one cognitively processes information about himself in relation to group treatments and changes in the strategies one uses in interacting with a system (Bowen, 1978; Minuchin, 1974) of interpersonal relationships during group treatments.



APPENDIX A

An Observation Manual  
For Scoring Verbal Self-disclosure and Feedback  
In Interpersonal Process Groups



## I. Observational Setting, Scoring Sheets and Coding Symbols

The experiential group interactions will be recorded on video tape in equivalent time samples of each of the group sessions. Each observer will score from observation of the playback of these tapes. The observation will consist of an observer watching assigned group members and scoring their statements of feedback or self-disclosure as defined in Section II of this manual.

The following are the categories and symbols which will be used in the scoring of feedback or self-disclosure.

### FEEDBACK

Personal (PER)  
Interpersonal (IEP)  
Analytical (ANL)  
Behavioral (BEH)  
Evaluative (EVL)  
Directive (DIR)  
Request (REQ)

### Scoring Symbols

Individual (X)  
Whole Group (O)

### SELF-DISCLOSURE

Personal (PER)  
Analytical (ANL)  
Behavioral (BEH)  
Evaluative (EVL)  
Decisional (DES)  
Miscellaneous (MIS)  
Request (REQ)

Affiliative (W)  
Partial Group (%)  
Indirect (I)



An Example of the Scoring Sheet is shown below:

Members Name: John

Feedback

PER	X	X	%	X	
ANL	X	X			
BEH	X		X	O	
EVL	X	X	W		
DIR	O	W	X	W	
IEP	X	W	I	I	
REQ	X	X	O	X	

TIME

Self-disclosure

PER	X	X	X		
ANL	X	X			
BEH	X	X	X		
EVL	X	X			
DEC	X	X	X	X	
MIS	X	X			
REQ	X	X	X	X	

TIME

The symbol (X) indicates that the observed group member has given feedback to another individual in the group or has given self-disclosure. The "whole" symbol (O) indicated that the group member has given feedback or disclosed self to the group as a whole. The "partial" symbol (%) indicates that the group member has given feedback to two or more members of the group but not to the group as a whole. The "affiliative" symbol (W) represents "we" or "you and I" statements which indicate the group member has included himself in feedback given to the whole or partial group. The "indirect" symbol (I) indicates that the group member has indirectly given feedback by using the third person (i.e., he, she, it) instead of the second person (i.e., you).



## II. Definitions, procedures and examples for scoring verbal feedback and self-disclosure.

### Feedback

Feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his reaction to the behavior, emotion and/or cognition of the other member(s). The following are the categories, definitions and examples of feedback to be scored.

I. Personal Feedback (PERF): Personal feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his personal perspective of other group member(s).

- a. Personality/intrapersonal style/intrapersonal beliefs and values.
- b. Interpersonal style/interpersonal experiences/interpersonal beliefs and values.
- c. Feelings and emotions.

These dimensions may be expressed in words and phrases of literal definition and meaning or in words and phrases of figurative definition and meaning such as occurs with metaphor, simile and analogies.

### Examples:

### Scored symbol:

#### Personality

John, you're an angry person.	PER X (literal)
Kim, you remind me of a little China doll.	PER X (figurative)
We all seem like insecure people.	PER W (literal)



Intrapersonal Style

John, I think you don't accept yourself as an angry person.	PER X (literal)
John, I bet you kick yourself everytime you get angry.	PER X (figurative)

Intrapersonal Experiences

John, I think you need to be loved.	PER X (literal)
John, you're a lion that needs to be petted.	PER X (figurative)

Intrapersonal Beliefs and Values

I think you believe that one must condemn themselves to keep from making other mistakes.	PER X (figurative)
I think you believe that people must always be loved to be happy.	PER X (literal)

Interpersonal Style

John, you sure get angry a lot with us.	PER X (literal)
I think Peter acts like a bulldozer.	PER I (figurative) (indirect)
John, you're a bomb blowing away everyone around you.	PER X (figurative)
Bob, I think you've made everyone angry.	PER X (to Bob) PER I (to group) ANL I (to group)

Interpersonal Experiences

John, I think you feel everyone hates you.	PER X (literal)
This is our group.	PER W (literal) (affiliative)
May, you feel us tigers are going to paw you to death.	PER X (figurative)



### Interpersonal Beliefs and Values

I think you believe that if a person confronts another person then they are angry with them. PER X (figurative)

I think you believe that you must never blow your own horn to be liked. PER X (figurative)

### Feelings and Emotions

John, you look angry. PER X (literal)

All of you seem upset today. PER O (literal)  
(whole)

May, you look like you could get up and sing and dance. PER X (figurative)

II. Interpersonal Feedback (IEPF): Interpersonal feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his behavior, emotion and experience evoked in reaction to other member's behavior, emotion and cognition.

#### Examples:

Mary, I get scared everytime I'm near you. IEP X (literal)  
\*PER X (literal/  
self-disclosure)  
\*ANL X (literal/  
self-disclosure)

\*Note that two forms of self-disclosure are also scored from the statement as well as the feedback. (Also see the section on Self-Disclosure.)

We are all angered by what you said. IEP X (literal)  
\*\*PER W (literal)  
\*\*ANL W (literal)

\*\*Note affiliative/indirect/whole group or partial group directed statements are always scored as feedback. The self-disclosure component of a "W" statement is inherent in the definition, thus does not also have to be scored.



Everytime you say that, I want to  
get my ax out to grind.

IEP X (literal)  
\*PER X (figurative/  
self-disclosure)  
\*ANL X (self-  
disclosure)

I hate you.

IEP X (literal)  
PER X (self-  
closure)

Everytime you make like an impene-  
trable fortress we all go to someone  
else's door.

IEP X (figurative)  
PER W (figurative)  
ANL W

I really appreciate you being candid  
with me.

IEP X (literal)  
PER X (self-  
disclosure)  
ANL X (self-  
disclosure)

My heart pounds when I hear you say  
that.

IEP X (literal)  
BEH X (self-  
disclosure)  
ANL X (self-  
disclosure)

Tom, I think Bob got anygry when you  
said that.

PER X (to Tom)  
PER I (to Bob)  
ANL I (to Bob)  
\*\*\*IEP (not scored)

\*\*\*Note that this is not scored IEP because the sender did not express his reaction to Tom's behavior but instead interpreted Bob's behavior. The sender would have to state his reaction to Tom either directly or indirectly for it to become IEP. Further, it is very important to remember that indirect means that the sender expresses his reaciton or perspective to someone other than directly to the the person his reaction or perspective is about. E.g., Tom, you made me angry when you said that (direct); Bob, you know Tom really made me angry when he said that (indirect).



Jack, Tom's remarks really make me angry, too.

IEP I  
PER X (self-  
disclosure)  
ANL X (self-  
disclosure)

Bob, I think you got angry when Tom said that.

PER I (to Tom)  
PER X (to Bob)  
ANL X (to Bob)  
\*\*\*IEP (not scored)

III. Analytical Feedback (ANLF): Analytical feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his perspective of cause and effect or correlational relationships which act on the intrapersonal, interpersonal or emotional functioning of the other members.

Examples:

You're angry because it's raining. PER X

You're upset because you hate  
yourself when you get assertive. PER X  
ANL X  
PER X  
\*\*\*\* ANL X

\*\*\*\*Note that in the above example two personal feedback components (i.e., "you're angry" and "you hate yourself") and two relationships are drawn using "because" and "when".

You feel backed against the wall  
because Jack (group member) was  
acting like a judge and jury.

PER X (figurative)  
ANL X  
PER I (figurative)  
(to Jack)

IV. Evaluative Feedback(EVL): Evaluative feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state a judgemental perspective of reward or criticism



of the other group member(s) and their behavior, emotion and/or cognition. These responses are typically drawn from dichotomies such as good vs. bad, right vs. wrong, smart vs. stupid, acceptable vs. unacceptable and etc. Experiential-based statements such as "I like you," "you make me sick" "I hate you" or "I appreciate that," etc. may imply reward or criticism, but are not scored as such. They are scored as interpersonal feedback.

Examples:

You're stupid.	EVL X
An Orangatang could have done better than that.	EVL X (figurative)
That sure is a ridiculous state of jealousy you're in right now.	EVL X PER X
Tom, I think you believe Bob's behavior was stupid.	PER X (to Tom) ***EVL (not scored)

\*\*\*Note that again, Tom would have to agree or state his evaluation directly or indirectly for EVL to be scored.

V. Behavioral Feedback (BEH): Behavioral feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words state descriptions of the other members overt physical behavior which may represent experiential reactions.

Examples:

I notice you shaking your head.	BEH X
I think I see a tear in your eye.	BEH X
You sure have a drawn look today.	BEH X
Your hands look like an earthquake.	BEH X (figurative)



I noticed when Tom began talking about  
 May you got up and left.                   BEH X  
   ANL X

VI. Directive Feedback (DIR): Directive feedback is a verbal response in which a group member's words a) state his perspective of what the behavior, emotion or cognition of the other members should be; or b) direct the other member's behavior, emotion or cognition. This is stated as advice, commands, warnings, permissions, etc. statements of directed norms and values.

Examples:

Stop telling me about your problems.   DIR X

This group needs to stop avoiding the  
 issues.                                   DIR W

We can do with the group whatever we  
 want to.                                 DIR W

If you keep hollering, I am going to  
 get angry.                             DIR X  
   DEC X (self-  
   disclosure)  
   IEP X  
   ANL X (self-

VII. Request for Feedback (REQ): Request for feedback may take the form of questions or commands, thus must be carefully distinguished from directive feedback.

Examples:

Tell me how I make you feel.           REQ X

What am I suppose to do?               REQ X

What kind of person do I seem like?   REQ X



## Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his perspective of his own behavior, emotion and cognition to the other members.

The following are categories, definitions and examples of self-disclosure to be scored.

I. Personal Self-Disclosure (PER): Personal self-disclosure is a verbal response in which a group member's words state his perspective of his

- a. Personality/intrapersonal style/intrapersonal experiences/intrapersonal beliefs and values
- b. Interpersonal style/interpersonal experiences/Interpersonal beliefs and values
- c. Feelings and emotions.

### Examples:

#### Personality

I'm an angry person. PER X

I'm just a tin soldier. PER X

#### Intrapersonal Style

I don't accept myself as an angry person. PER X

I kick myself everytime I get angry. PER X

#### Intrapersonal Experience

I really need to be loved. PER X

I'm just a lion needing to be petted. PER X



### Intrapersonal Beliefs and Values

I believe that a person must kick themselves to keep from making the same mistake again. PER X

I think people must be loved to be happy. PER X

### Interpersonal Style

I get hostile a lot with people who confront me. PER X

I think I'm a bomb blowing away everyone around me. PER X

### Interpersonal Experience

I feel that everyone hates me. PER X

I think this is my group. PER X

### Interpersonal Beliefs and Values

I believe that if a person confronts another person then they must be angry with them. PER X

I can't ever blow my own horn or people won't like me. PER X

### Feelings and Emotions

I'm angry. PER X

I could get up and sing and dance. PER X

That really hacked me off. PER X

II. Analytical Self-Disclosure (ANL): Analytical self-disclosure is a verbal response in which a group member's words state cause and effect or correlational relationships which act on his intrapersonal, interpersonal or emotional functioning.



Examples:

I'm angry because my mother told me  
off today.

PER X  
ANL X

I feel backed against the wall by  
what Bob said.

PER X  
IEP I (to Bob)  
ANL X

I hate you.

PER X  
IEPX (to re-  
ceiver)

I really appreciate your being candid  
with me.

PER X  
ANL X  
IEP X (to re-  
ceiver)

III. Evaluative Self-Disclosure (EVL): Evaluative self-disclosure is a verbal response in which a group member's words state a judgemental perspective of reward or criticism of his behavior, emotions or cognition. These responses are typically drawn from dichotomies such as good vs. bad, right vs. wrong, smart vs. stupid and etc. Experiential-based statements such as "I like myself" or "I hate myself" are considered personal self-disclosure and are not scored EVL.

Examples:

I'm really stupid.

EVL X

I did the best job of anyone there.

EVL X

IV. Behavioral Self-Disclosure (BEH): Behavioral self-disclosure is a verbal response in which a group member's words state descriptions of his actual



overt physical behavior, which may represent experiential reactions.

Examples:

I notice my hands shaking. BEV X

I have to get up and leave whenever  
Tom talks about May. BEH X  
ANL X  
IEP I

I'm sitting here in a cold sweat. BEH X

V. Decisional Self-Disclosure (DEC): Decisional self-disclosure is a verbal response in which the group member's words state his decision or intention to be- have, emote or think in certain way.

Examples:

I am going to be a better person. DEC X

Whenever you say that, I am going to  
remind you of it. DEC X  
IEP X

I am not going to be hostile with her  
anymore. DEC X

I think I will try to stay more calm  
when you confront me. DEC X  
IEP X

VI. Miscellaneous Self-Disclosure: This category is utilized to score any statements that are scoreable in the other categories of self-disclosure and feedback. Statements scored in this category do not reflect the personal involvement considered necessary to produce group processes that significantly effect the members' intrapersonal, interpersonal and emotional functioning.



Examples:

It is raining outside.	MIS X
You have blue eyes.	MIS X
I believe man's greatest challenge is space.	MIS X
I have a gold watch.	MIS X
I went sailing today.	MIS X

VII. Request for Self-Disclosure (REQ): Requests for self-disclosure may take the form of questions or commands, thus must be carefully distinguished from directive feedback.

Examples:

Tell me about yourself.	REQ X
How do you feel?	REQ X



## APPENDIX B

### A Five Point Global Rating Continuum of Interpersonal Skills Competency



A Five Point Global Rating of Continuum  
of Interpersonal Skills Competency

1. Overall hurtful responding. Responses do not appropriately attend to even the surface experiences of the helpee. Responses are inaccurate, communicate disrespect and a lack of genuineness.
2. Overall response level is less than interchangeable with that of helpee but helper does communicate an awareness of surface feelings of the helpee. Responses may reflect occasional lack of genuineness or respect.
3. Overall minimally facilitative level of responding. The majority of the responses communicate interchangeable empathy understanding and minimally facilitative levels of other stage 1 skills.
4. The helper frequently communicates accurate additive understanding of the helpee with virtually no responses at less than an interchangeable level. Challenge skills are demonstrated with appropriate timing and tentativeness.
5. The helper lays a base of interchangeable responses and then responds at a consistently accurate and additive level. Helper shows an ability to use a wide range of challenge skills including confrontation and immediacy.



APPENDIX C

Information and Release Form for  
Taylor-McGuire Research Project



Information and Release Form  
Taylor-McGuire Research  
Project - Winter, 1981

You are being asked to participate in a thesis research project designed to assess different aspects of interpersonal functioning in a small group setting; i.e., CLP 6457-Psy 6946.

Approximately 1/3 of the time (i.e., 30 minutes) in the group lab each week for 9 weeks will be videotaped to be analyzed at a later time. There will be no observers present whether or not the group is being taped.

The class will be divided into two matched groups composed of approximately 8 members each. Dr. Jack McGuire will serve as the group trainer/facilitator in each group. General contractual guidelines regarding expectations for group participation will be provided to all members and discussed prior to the first group meeting. Specific structural guidelines for each lab group will be provided at the first group meeting of each lab section.

At the end of this project (subsequent to the last group session) the experimenter, Dana Taylor, and Dr. McGuire will provide you with full details as to the nature of the independent hypotheses, etc. The final writeup of this research project will be available as a



bound thesis volume in the library for anyone interested in a full description of the study, the results, etc.

No group member will be personally identified in the thesis, data analysis, etc. Code numbers will be assigned to each group member, including the trainer, and this list will be maintained only by Dr. McGuire.

While the maintenance of confidentiality within each group is always a central requisite of group participation, due to the controlled aspect of these groups, it is particularly critical that group members not discuss their group experience with anyone outside their group.

I understand that I do not have to participate in this research project and that I can take CLP 6457-Psy 6946 at another time. By signing this form I agree to participate in the research project as outlined above.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX D

Experiential Group Introduction  
A Contract for Interpersonal Growth Groups



CLP 6457  
Experiential Group Introduction

The experiential group is a specific form of laboratory learning. The focus of this laboratory is interpersonal relations as such. A small group of people come together to assess their interpersonal strengths and deficits and to experiment with effective forms of relating that have not usually been part of their day to day interactional style. Improved interpersonal or human relations skills come about through experience based learning in which you as a participant interact with and receive feedback from others in specialized ways.

Each participant, for example, learns how to talk about himself, how to reveal the "person inside" more responsibly, how to foster constructive emotions and handle destructive ones, how to show care and concern for others, how to see the world through the eyes of others, how to challenge others with care and involvement, how to understand others, how to engage in self-exploration, how to be a more fully functioning human being.

The experiential group allows comparative strangers to talk with one another at often deep levels of intimacy; the cultural prerequisites for friendship and intimacy are laid aside insofar as possible. The participants deal with one another intimately, not because



they may be long-time acquaintances but merely because they are fellow human beings. The group allows the participants to confront others out of a sense of caring and concern; it allows for self-disclosure and the expression of feeling. The group allows for the laying aside of those forms of politeness, etc. that are really often nothing more than constructions that make relating safe.

To participate in a group laboratory experience is to be committed to the notion that the unexamined life is not worth living. It is to take the risk of becoming more aware of my areas of strength in human living and my areas of deficit. It means that I will struggle to avoid both dependence and counter-dependence and opt for interdependence with others. It is realizing that others have resources for my own growth which they are willing to share if I am willing to share my own. (adapted from Egan, 1973)

As a participant-member of your group, you are expected to interact with the other members and trainer of your group with the following dual general goals:

1. As a full member/participant it is expected that you will use responding, challenging self challenge and group specific skills to accomplish both your own personal goals/agenda in the group and to help others achieve their goals/agenda.



2. As a clinician/trainee it is expected that you will model and practice the skills of effective interpersonal living (see below).

Responding Skills (see Egan, 1975)

1. Facilitative attending
2. Accurate empathy-primary
3. Genuineness
4. Concreteness
5. Respect

Challenge-self challenge skills (see Egan, 1975)

1. Accurate empathy-advanced
2. Self-disclosure
3. Immediacy
4. Confrontation

Group Specific Skills (see Egan, 1977, p. 261-278).



## A Contract for Interpersonal Growth Groups

This is a contract describing a number of characteristics that are considered essential to the functioning of interpersonal growth groups. The purpose of the contract is to help you understand the basic requirements of the group before you commit yourself to involvement. Please read the following contract carefully and then decide whether you would like to participate in this kind of experience. If you participate in the group, it is expected that you will strive to adhere to the spirit of the contract.

The goals of the group:

There are two primary goals of the group. The first is interpersonal (between people) growth. This involves discovering new ways of relating to or being present with other people. It also involves taking a look at how and why you relate to other people in certain ways and how people perceive us. The second goal of the group is intrapersonal (within the person) growth. This involves taking a look at ourselves, how we feel, how we think, how we emote and seeing more clearly how we function. Within this group, often intrapersonal and interpersonal growth are combined in certain experiences and both can be gleamed simultaneously.



## Leadership in the Group

The group will have a leader but he is not a leader in the traditional sense. If you have difficulty understanding what the contract calls for, he will help you understand it, but he is not there to teach in the usual sense. The leader functions as a leader-member since he is interested in his own interpersonal growth as well as the growth of the group members. Since he has had experience and training in group dynamics, he can serve as a resource person and sometimes he will serve as a model of kinds of behavior called for by the contract. However, since he is not completely self-actualized in his interpersonal relationships, all the group members share in the responsibility for demonstrating the contractual behavior.

### The Laboratory-Like Nature of the Group Experience

The activities you are about to participate in should be viewed as an experiment in relating to others. You will have an opportunity to try yourself in new ways.

1. Learning by Doing. You will learn how to relate to others more effectively by actually relating. You will see yourself in action and you will talk about the ways in which you relate to the other members of the group.



2. A Climate of Experimentation. The term laboratory implies experimentation. You will experiment with your own behavior attempting to relate to others in new ways. This does not mean that the group will invent new ways of acting. Rather, you will try to deal with others in ways that you do not ordinarily use in your day to day contact. For instance, if you are usually quiet and reserved, you may experiment with speaking up in the group. For you, this is a new way of being present with others.

3. No Pre-Judging the Experiment. The person who comes to the group convinced that the experiment will not work, usually leaves it feeling quite self-satisfied. His prophesy has been self-fulfilling. You are asked not to pre-judge the experiment, but rather to reserve your judgment. The only way you will ever know if the experiment works or not, is to give yourself to it as completely as possible.

4. Feedback. Your own behavior is the major input into the experiment, but trying new ways of behaving is somewhat useless unless it is possible to determine how this behavior strikes others. Therefore, you are asked not only to react to others, but to tell others directly how their behavior strikes you. You too will receive feedback from the other participants. By means of such



feedback, you should come to a better understanding of your own interpersonal abilities and limitations.

Try to get a feeling for your ability to involve yourself with others. All of us have strong points and all of us have areas of deficit in our interpersonal living. Use the group to get a feeling for both.

### Living in the Now

There are several rules designed to promote awareness and expression of moment to moment feelings.

1. The Here and Now. Speak of what you are feeling at the moment rather than what took place somewhere else at another time. When you talk about things that took place outside the group, try to make them relevant to what is going on in the group in the present.

2. Who Determines Truth. For each person what is true is determined by what is in him, what he directly feels and finds making sense in himself and the way he lives inside himself. We can tell another what we perceive about them but whether or not it actually turns out to be useful, only the person himself can determine. We want him to express his truth at the moment.

3. Be Specific. When you are speaking for yourself, say "I". When you are speaking to somebody else, call him by name. Don't say "People don't listen to you when you talk." Say, "Bill, I have some very strong feelings and I don't think you are hearing me." If you



have some-thing to say to the whole group, do it through one individual. Don't say "There are some people in the group with whom I get along better." But say it directly to those people. Say, "Mary, I perceive you as a very warm and gentle person." If you address yourself to the whole group, the members often will just sit there and listen respectfully but not really give you a personal response.

4. Settle Your Business in the Group. If you have something to work out with another member of the group, try to do it in the group itself. However, if that's not possible, it may be necessary that two or three of you settle it outside the group provided you summarize to the group what has taken place. Don't let your outside activities cyphen off what is of concern to all the members.

#### Fusing Emotion and Language

Some of your modes of contact with one another will be non-verbal; however, the principle mode involves talking. Expressing feelings through language will be one of the crucial factors of the experiment.

1. Emotion. Many of our day-to-day social interactions do not encourage full emotional expression. This is an experiment in which you are to search for how you feel and seek to find ways of expressing it as constructively as possible. Intellectual thinking is



important in the group, but emotions are equally important. Sometimes our emotions and ideas do not coincide and it is good that we recognize these differences within ourselves.

2. Language. Language can be used to help us contact one another or it can be used as a barrier to prevent us from real closeness. This is an experiment designed to help you become aware of the way you are using language and to try for more complete ways of translating yourself into language. Try to avoid cliches and generalities that don't really express the unique you. Instead, search for words that express the deeper parts of yourself.

3. Fusing Emotion and Language. Your job in this aspect of the experiment is somewhat like that of the poet. You are to try to express your emotion in language and to let your language be colored by feeling. Sometimes we experience things so deeply that it is difficult to put them into language. The group is an opportunity to try to do just that.

#### The Basis Ingredients of Interactions

Since the major element of the group is interaction between members the following kinds of activity are crucial to a growth producing group:

1. Self-Disclosure. We try to be as honest as possible and to express ourselves as we really are



and really feel just as much as we can. Honest, real self-expression of your thoughts or feelings is equally welcome as long as it is within the framework of the contract. It is welcome and fitting because you feel it and for no other reasons. We try to express what is difficult, hard to say, what hurts or is puzzling, troubling, what we usually cannot say because it is not fitting to say.

You are not asked to reveal your past life or darkest secrets. You are important, not your secrets. Although you do not have to talk about deep secrets, you may speak as deeply about yourself as you wish. The point is, you are not forced to do so. Sometimes if someone speaks rather personally about himself, you will find it easier to talk about yourself.

2. The Manner of Expressing Feelings. You are encouraged to let emotion be part of the group experience. Too often, we swallow our feelings (for instance, our anger) only to let them filter out in rather unproductive way. (We become cold or unproductive. We make snide remarks or remain silent, etc.) There's another possibility, however. Speak frankly about your emotion laden contacts with one another. For instance, if you are angry - instead of just blowing up or swallowing your anger, let the other know you are



angry and would like to work it through. For example: "John, I'm really angry with what you said. But, I'd like to tell you why and get some response from you. If possible, I want to work this out with you here." Perhaps such frankness, coupled with a desire to work things through, would constitute for you a new way of being present to another.

3. Listening. It is amazing to discover how poorly we listen to others. The contract asks you to examine your ability to listen. Listening does not mean just hearing words in sentences and understanding their meaning. Rather, it means reaching out for what another has to say. It means listening to persons rather than just ideas. Learning to pick up all the cues that others emit, both verbal and non-verbal is a part of listening. Facial expressions, gestures, a shrug of the shoulder, bodily positions - all these are sources of communication. Often, too, when we communicate with one another, we put surplus meaning in the message by the way we say things. You are asked to become sensitive to the surplus message as well as the ideas.

4. Support. Support is probably the most difficult of the contractual requirements. However, it is absolutely necessary for effective group operation. Support means sincerely accepting others, particularly when they put themselves on the line and engage in



meaningful self-disclosure. You can sincerely accept others without always approving of everything they do. For instance, you might reveal something about yourself of which you yourself do not approve. In this example, you would expect others to support you for having revealed your thought, but you would hardly expect them to approve of the things you yourself find unacceptable.

Support consists of more than such cliches as "I understand" or "I know how you feel." Sometimes it means admitting that what has been said makes you uncomfortable or that you are at a loss for a response. This can be supportive because it is honest. Expressions which show that you really care about how it is with the other person, that you are with him in his attempt to understand himself and expand his range of freedom are highly supportive.

5. Confronting Others. Confrontation is basically an invitation to another to examine and reflect upon his behavior in the context of the group. For instance, suppose another person in the group is simply not fulfilling the provisions of the contract. If you tell him this and ask him to examine his behavior, then, you are confronting him. The way you confront, however, is extremely important. The cardinal rule is that you should confront another because you are concerned about him and want to involve yourself with him. It is not



just "telling a person off". Responsible confrontation is an invitation to self-examination, not an act of punishment. For example, it sometimes makes us feel better to express anger toward someone but simply communicating anger may do very little to set up interpersonal contact with that person. Undeniably, confrontation will almost always have some kind of punitive side effects because none of us likes being challenged about our negative behavior. But if our confrontation is sincerely communicating the desire for greater involvement with the other person, the effects of punishment are minimized. Since confrontation is so easily misused, it is something you must experiment with in the group.

6. Responding to Confrontation. If confrontation is responsible, that is, if it really is an invitation to self-examination, then obviously the best response is self-examination. However, when we are confronted, even by someone who is concerned for us and wants to involve himself with us, our instinctive response is often to defend ourselves and to attack the confronter. That is, we respond to the punitive side of our confrontation instead of to the confrontation itself. Therefore, try to listen to what the one confronting is saying and not just to the feeling he is evoking in you. If what he says is true, and if, in addition, he wants to involve



himself with you, then it is to your advantage to listen, to examine yourself, and to respond to him. This is difficult, but frequently rewarding.

#### A Stance Against Flight

It is not easy to engage in this kind of group process. Sometimes it is painful to disclose ourselves for we are afraid when we get close to others. You may find yourself trying to avoid the fulfillment of the contract. Some ways of escaping that you may be inclined to use include: calling upon humor whenever things get too serious; keeping your feelings to yourself; spending too much time on intellectualized interpretations of others behavior; and worst of all, being a cynic about the experience even before you enter into it. The way to keep your behavior constructive when you have such inclinations, is to talk about your tendency toward flight in the group.

#### Freedom in the Group

This contract calls for self-disclosure in the group, but it does not say what you must talk about nor does it dictate the level of your disclosure. This is something you must work out yourself in the give and take of the group interaction. You must choose the kinds of interaction most meaningful to you. Some of the experiments you engage in will be successes and some failures. This is like life outside the group. Try not



to expect either too much or too little from the group. The only way you really learn about the possibilities of the group experience is by giving yourself to it.

This contract has been modeled after and some actions have been taken directly from a sample group contract in Encounter: Group processes for Interpersonal Growth by Gerald Egan, Brown-Cole Publishing Company, Belmont, CA, 1970.



APPENDIX E

A Group Log for Experiential Training Groups



CLP 6457  
Group Log

Keep a log of the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and behaviors that highlight each meeting and of the thoughts and feelings you have about the group between sessions.

Enter material you can use to make the next meeting a more effective here-and-now learning experience for yourself and your fellow group members. Enter experiences ("Jane ignored me the whole meeting. In general she has shown a certain indifference toward me. Check to see what is going on"), behaviors ("I asked John a lot of questions and really did not make much of an effort to understand him. I noticed during the week that I do that quite a bit. I think others should challenge me more when I act like that"), and feelings ("I've been on a 'high' from the last meeting; everyone in the group contracted me, but no one dealt with me as if I were a 'case', even though I cried. I don't want to be a blubbering slob, but I want to be able to cry at times without feeling I'm betraying my manhood.")

Keep track of what you have to work on and put effort into it (for example, using accurate empathy more frequently, not avoiding people who seem distant to you, and so on).



Use the log to keep track of where you stand with each of the other members in terms of establishing and developing relationships.

Make your entries relatively brief and concrete. Ask yourself whether you can use what you write at the next meeting.

There is a tendency on the part of some participants to keep excellent logs but then to fail to use this material in the group meetings. If you are having difficulty using your log material, perhaps it is good to make this problem known at a meeting and let others help you introduce the material into the group discussion.

Draw an agenda from your log. Your log has a very practical function in relation to the group. As you read your log, you can come to some decisions on what you want to accomplish in the next group meeting. Therefore, each weekly log should conclude with a practical agenda for the next group meeting. For instance, you might write in your log:

I don't talk to Jane at all, because I think she is rather indifferent to me and I'm attracted to her.

I don't like this combination.

Then your agenda at the end might have the following entry:



Talk to Jane. Tell her your feelings. Clear the air. It's no use to merely avoid her, and you must admit you don't really know how she feels.

The log together with an agenda for the next meeting is, then, not a one-time exercise. It is a continuing exercise and perhaps one of the most important ones you will do. In unstructured groups the members usually come unprepared to group meetings. Each member could probably say to himself or herself: "I wonder what we're going to do in this meeting." The log/agenda exercise will help you make things happen. It will reduce the amount of time that you and your fellow group members mill around and waste time.



## CLP 6457: Experiential Lab

## Log

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Group # \_\_\_\_\_

Process Notes:Agenda from last week:

1. Substantially worked on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Worked on somewhat \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Worked on slightly \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Not worked on \_\_\_\_\_.

New Agenda Items:



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